



We have 12 years to limit climate change catastrophe, warns the United Nations. It is important that we each do our bit to help the environment in whatever way we can. We spent 8-12 hours per day at the office. Doing our bit to help the environment does not have to be expensive or time-consuming. By making a few small changes in the workplaces, we can help reduce our environmental impact and even increase productivity while we are at it. Here's how:



- 1. Go Digital:** The greenest paper is no paper at all, said Vince Digneo, sustainability strategist at Adobe. Going paperless is the first step towards making a workplace environmentally friendly. Use electronic forms whenever possible, and email letters and documents rather than sending printed copies. It is not always possible to go completely paperless with all regulatory compliance requirements, but certainly, have the potential to use less paper for a routine job. It is all about creating awareness.



- 2. Create monthly green challenges:** Competition is a natural by-product of the work environment. A team-building exercise with the goal of having a green environment, we can run a monthly team challenge. It can be a fun way of combining competition and going green. We can challenge the office to go a month with no plastic eating utensils and reward those who stick with it by offering small prizes.



3. Green up the Office space: Provide a space where employees can get access to natural light and fresh air. The natural gas emitted by office buildings, computers and AC unit contain methane and carbon-dioxide. One easy and affordable way to promote a better air quality and reduce these emissions, choose the best plants for indoor air quality.



These plants will help to reduce greenhouse emissions and give the office a 'green thumbs up'!

4. Encourage Cycling and Carpooling: Cycling is the most energy efficient mode of transport with a high potential to reduce energy consumption and to enhance the liveability of cities. If riding a bicycle is impractical due to distance, better to consider a carpool system. It can help to reduce our carbon footprint, strengthen work relationships and save money.



5. Flexible work schedules: This can save time, reduce company overhead expenses and increase staff satisfaction. Due to current technological advances such as instant messaging, video conferencing and other innovative workflow tools staff can work from home.



6. Opt for eco friendly office products: There may not be room in the budget to buy exclusively sustainable and eco-friendly products, but focus on certain areas that have a huge overall impact on the environment, such as more efficient electronics. Better to purchase eco labeled electronics that will ultimately avoid the disposal of tons of hazardous waste.



7. Business Partner: Partnering with other like-minded eco-conscious businesses make sense, specially if your company aims to be "environmentally-friendly" and values sustainable business practices. By choosing companies that endorse energy efficiency and green alternatives, it can reduce the amount of paper, plastic, and oil it takes for them to deliver to their workplace.



8. Create a Consciousness for:

Awareness is important to sensitise employees towards a greener workplace and generate interest towards a cleaner and greener office environment.

a. **Paper Usage:** Even if the paperless office may still seem impractical, but at least try to cut down on printed material when possible. It is all about creating awareness-

- I. Asks staff to write their names in the record for using papers, and count it at the end of the month, make them realise how much papers are being used?
- II. Read on-screen and only print documents when absolutely necessary.
- III. Take a two- sided print.
- IV. Avoid fax, just scan and email
- V. Put recycling bins in the office.
- VI. Check toner-saving settings (with recyclable toner cartridges)



Note: Use only 100% recycled products in the office and, ask vendors for eco-labelled/FSC Certified paper.

b. **Electricity:** Turn off electronics, lighting, and all equipments at the main plug. However, if the computer is energy efficient and remember to put it in sleep mode and shut it down. Data centres require cooling of servers and huge amounts of power. Better to move over to virtualised servers, run the business over a cloud. Cloud computing works out cheaper massively reduces carbon footprint.



c. **Lighting:** Lighting is little more than an afterthought in the average office building, but by switching from incandescent light bulbs to CFL lights or LED actually it can save energy.

d. **Water:** Employees are not normally answerable for the water bill, which leads to irresponsible practices and little concern for day-to-day water volume. Ask them to use reusable bottle to drink. Fix the timer on taps, which saves thousands of litres per flush.



e. **Zero waste:** The average office worker generates 600gms of waste and most of it can be recycled. Make a practice to opt for zero waste.



f. **Segregate Dry & Wet waste:** Place garbage cans in central areas throughout the office and in the lunchroom. Ask employees to make a practice to segregate the dry and wet waste at the source, make compost of wet waste. Use this compost for indoor plants and garden.



g. **Make Sustainable Food Choices:** Going vegan will have the biggest effect, but even going vegetarian, or cutting out as much meat as possible can have a huge impact on the environment. It will support the local economy also.



h. **Opt for an eco-friendly meeting:** Choose video-conferencing or opt for online solutions Both are financially and environmentally more sustainable for any business.



Numerous reports and studies from reputable organisations such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology have found that companies have increased their profits by embracing sustainability.

Source: https://greenerideal.com/guides/environmentally-friendly-office/#More_Compensation
<https://nrchmedia.com/environmental/10-simple-steps-to-green-your-office>