

10 Ways to Save Money by Going Green

By Focus Experts

Companies everywhere are looking for ways to go green and make a positive difference for the environment. Policies such as mandatory "green training" of employees and energy conservation are being discussed in boardrooms across America, and with good cause. Being environmentally conscious is very important, and a responsible way of doing businesses. However, many of the green products and training courses are expensive, and sometimes there just isn't room in the budget to go that extra mile. Lucky for you, there are actually quite a few ways to go green and also save money. Many green products cost less, save more energy, and cut down on waste, which not only helps the green movement, but puts money back in your bottom line. Today we explore ten ways you can save money by going green.

Replace Office Lighting With Compact Fluorescent Bulbs



Compact fluorescent bulbs save money in two important ways. First, they use approximately [75% less energy](#) than traditional bulbs, which can slash your electricity usage dramatically. In addition, compact fluorescent bulbs last about 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs, meaning you don't have to waste money replacing the office bulbs all the time. Cutting down on unnecessary energy usage is a hallmark of the green lifestyle, and if you're trying to make your business more eco-friendly, this should be considered priority number one. The compact fluorescent bulbs come in all shapes, sizes and watts, making the change from incandescent bulbs as easy as, well, screwing in a light bulb!

Use Post-Consumer Recycled (PCR) Paper



Some business shy away from recycled paper because in the past it was not of very high quality. Thankfully this is no longer the case. Not only is PCR paper of equal quality or regular copy paper, it is actually around 10-20% cheaper, depending on the brand. According to a 2004 survey by [Conservatree](#), over 90% of all printing paper contained no recycled material. Those using recycled paper have always been in the minority, so switching makes you a leader and sets an example for others in your industry.

Use Remanufactured Ink and Toner Cartridges



Most remanufactured ink and toner cartridges cost about 15% less than standard brands. [Office Depot](#) reports that one returned cartridge keeps approximately 2.5 pounds of metal and plastic out of national landfills. One remanufactured toner cartridge also saves about half a gallon of oil from being consumed. If your business burns through ink at an average rate, that's quite an impact you can have by simply switching brands -- while saving money to boot!

Buy Energy Star Electronics



Energy Star products include electronics such as printers, copiers, fax machines and computers that are specially designed to use less electricity. These machines consume less power while working and power down when not in use. Energy Star products cut average power usage by about 75% over standard machines, which is not only good for the environment but can also save your business lots of money on electricity. Energy Star products currently save Americans around \$3.5 billion annually. Energy Star even offers [helpful calculators](#) to assess your business' unique needs and average expected savings by switching to their products.

Go Paperless - Buy Digital Storage Solutions to Cut Down on Paper



Rather than printing out copies of your next twenty-page employee manual or quarterly report and passing them out to all of your division, you should consider storing them on a network for everyone to view online. Instead of printing out forms and filling out reports with pen and paper, it makes sense to digitize them all and store them in an easily searchable data-base. This may seem counter-intuitive at first. After all, aren't big digital storage units expensive? Well, in the short term you will have to spend a bit of money to make the switch. However, you will instantly begin saving money on recurring paper expenses, filing cabinets to store all the paperwork as you expand, folders and dividers, ink and toner for the printers. Depending on how quickly you burn through these products on a regular basis, your digital storage will not only help the environment by reducing your dependence on loads of paper and ink, but it will also begin paying for itself in a matter of months.

Invest in Power Strips



You may be surprised to learn that nearly [three quarters](#) of office power might be consumed with machines are off but still plugged into a live outlet. This is all wasted electricity that could be conserved for other needs. Not to mention the fact that you shouldn't be paying for electricity to flow through off machines. The easiest way to cut down on this waste is to buy power strips for your office and hook all machines into them. The cubicle computers, the fax machines, the copy room - anywhere office machines are in operation, install power strips. At night when you close up the office, have your team click the power strips off. This will prevent the huge waste of electricity, simultaneously helping the environment and keeping monthly electric bill way down.

Harness the Power of Daylight Wherever Possible



We realize this is not always possible, but some businesses completely overlook this option. If you have a conference room lined with a few big windows, a sunny day with the blinds open should provide more than enough lighting for that day's meetings. Try this technique in your office the next bright day you get. You'd be surprised how well lit the room can look using only natural daylight. Out on the floor or in the general cubicle area, this might not be an option, but if you can keep the lights off in the conference room and administrator's offices even a quarter of the year with this technique, you'll be doing both the environment and your electric bill a big favor.

Turn Off Conference Room or Office Lights When Not in Use



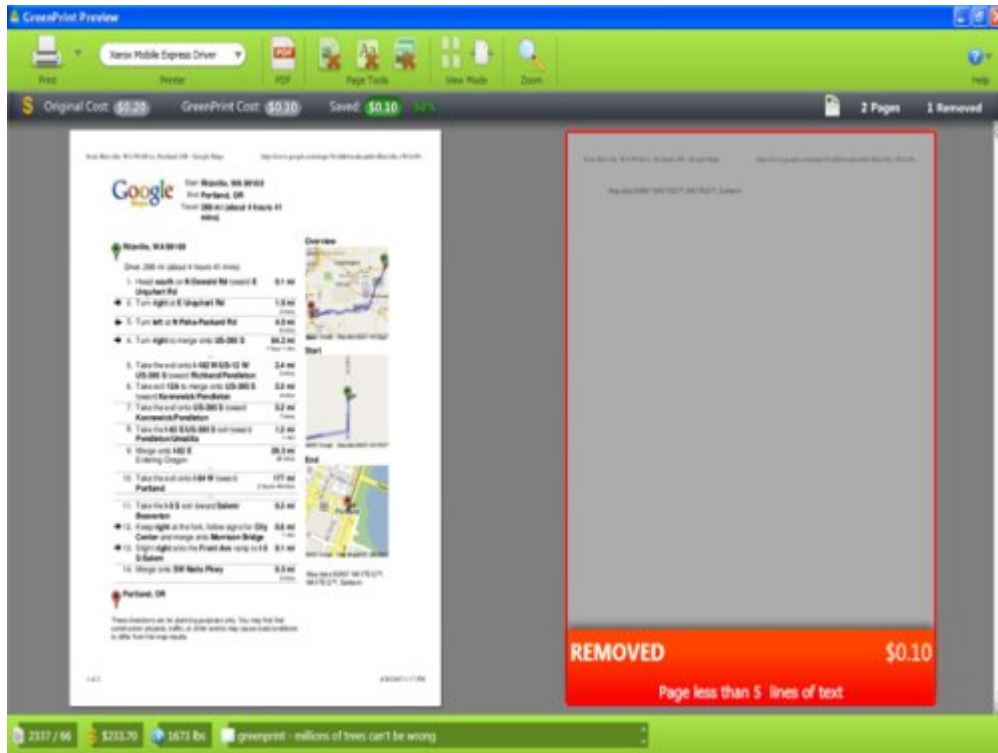
This might sound like an obvious suggestion, but go take a brief walk around your office building. It is more than likely that you will notice offices and conference rooms with lights on, even though no one is currently using the space. This is a common trend among most American offices and is one of the leading causes of wasted energy that could be conserved for other needs. If you find yourself or your employees frequently forgetting to hit the lights as they leave their offices or conference areas, you might want to consider installing motion-activated light switches. These eco-friendly light switches work by turning the lights on for 15 or 30 minutes whenever someone passes in front of them. However, this does not mean the lights will keep going off on you, because as long as there is motion in front of the sensor every now and again, it will reset the timer and keep the lights on. All you have to do is install one behind the chairs of the conference room or near your desk in your office, and the system will help slash your electricity costs dramatically whenever the rooms are not in use. Needless to say, this will not only save your company money, but will also help conserve power.

Consider Eco-Friendly Travel Options



Depending on where you're routinely traveling, you might be able to find greener travel options that also save money. For example, if you're only traveling from Connecticut to New York City, flying first class is both pricey and a waste of jet fuel. Instead, check out local train fare. It might take a bit longer to reach your destination, but you'll save a ton on trip costs and reduce environmental pollution. If you and several executives need company cars, consider fuel-efficient hybrid models. Not only will these reduce gas being charged to the company account, but they also reduce emissions and cut back on over-all fuel consumption.

Check Out GreenPrint to Cut Down on Wasted Printing



GreenPrint is an innovative piece of software that helps to identify and diagnose waste in printing. The program will examine the print job and alert the user of possible waste, such as pages with only a web address at the bottom of it, unnecessary images, etc. Users can then determine whether or not to remove what the program recommends before printing. GreenPrint saves businesses an average of 17% of total enterprise printing materials annually. The program even logs annual cost savings so that you can track just how much money your business is saving, per user, by implementing GreenPrint. On average, each user who actively uses GreenPrint saves around \$100.00 annually, which can add up to a significant over-all savings for medium and large sized organizations.