Cutting costs and increasing your 'green' credentials

By James Timpson   16 May 2014

Unless you want to revert back to the 1960's and dust off some old typewriters, your power bill will be a necessary evil.

Computers are an essential part of the office and without them you'll struggle to get anything done. If you want to go green there are plenty of other ways to reduce your carbon footprint and cut down expenses.

Paperless offices are safer and more efficient. Image QLS Solutions

Go paperless wherever possible

With today's technology you can set up an office anywhere. Tablets, laptops and even smartphones generally have all of the services and facilities that you would find on a personal computer. Printing is a thing of the past and with these devices you can process everything from invoices and receipts to pay slips and tax returns. Don't fight technology; embrace it.

According to Reduce.org, 400 reams of paper is the equivalent to 1.5 acres of a pine forest. Put into perspective, the average office worker uses 10,000 sheets of paper (20 reams) per year. Going paperless doesn't only have environmental benefits, but is also a safer way to store important documents.

Cloud storage systems have complex encryptions which will baffle even the most experienced of hackers; which is far more secure than keeping documents tucked away in a filing cabinet.

Consider renting a serviced office

Renting a traditional office space requires a lot of overhead costs; costs that could be shared with other businesses. A serviced office is essentially a pay-as-you-use office space that has a short term contract - usually 1-3 months. Moving to a new space isn't very energy efficient and everything from equipment transportation to installing new communication systems must be taken into account.

With a serviced office you won't need to worry about any of these expenses or environmentally harmful processes, as everything is already in place and ready-to-use. In addition, you can save money on bills as the costs for line rental, Internet, maintenance and electricity are usually included with the rent.

Keep lights and electronic devices turned off

Not turning off lights and electronic devices is one of the biggest wasted expenses in the office environment and accounts for an average of 25% of annual energy bills. Simply getting employees to turn off lights and switch off their computers when they leave a room can significantly reduce these emissions.

Apart from saving a few seconds, there are literally no benefits to keeping lights and computers on when they're not in use. If you're serious about making a difference, leave a few notes around the office to remind people. To really get your employees motivated you could even devise an incentive by providing your quarterly energy savings as a bonus.

Issue uniforms to your employees

Uniforms may seem like a thing of the past, but believe it or not, they can actually increase productivity in the workplace and decrease emissions. When it comes to the environment, it's the little changes that make all the difference and if

everyone wears the same uniform and keeps them at the place of work, imagine how much washing it will save during the evenings.

No doubt all of your employees put their work clothes on a quick cycle each night so they're nice and fresh in the morning. If you issue a uniform you can wash everything in one load, which not only saves energy, but also reduces pollution from detergents and fabric softeners.

From a business perspective a uniform can significantly increase morale as they limit the negative effects of hierarchy by making everyone feel like they're on the same level. Studies conducted by Corporate Clothing Wear have also shown that when an employee wears a company logo, they'll feel more responsibility and will do a better job.

Keep an eye on the thermostat

Alongside lighting and computers, heating bills are one of the biggest wasted expenses. During the summer open windows instead of turning on the air conditioning; and in the winter, keep them closed at all times. Keep an eye on both the thermostat and your employees. If the majority of them are rolling up their shirt sleeves and loosening their ties, lower the heat.

Heating bills can also have a direct relation to uniforms. Issuing the appropriate work gear for the environment can reduce thermostat tampering. For example, if your employees wear jumpers on colder days the thermostat won't need to be so high.

If you really want to make a difference to both the environment and your energy bills, start making changes today. Assign one of your employees the task of being your new "environmental manager;" arrange a meeting to inform your employees of your new green strategies; and offer some kind of incentive to give your workforce a bit of added motivation.

ABOUT JAMES TIMPSON

James, a self-styled business fanatic with a passion for technology and writing. Having spent many years working in the city James has recently moved to a more rural area of the UK and now focuses his efforts on writing and expanding for portfolio.

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