Green Workplace Survey Form

**2010**

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| --- | --- |
| Client Type | [ ] Resident [ ] Workplace |
| Client Name |  |
| Contact Name  (if different) |  |
| Business or Organization Name |  |
| Address 1 |  |
| Address 2 |  |
| City |  |
| State |  |
| Phone (landline) |  |
| Phone (cellular) |  |
| Property Address (if different from above) |  |
| Address 2 |  |
| City |  |
| State |  |
| Zip |  |
| Date of Survey |  |
| Time of Survey |  |
| Survey Conducted By |  |
| Clients Present During the Survey |  |

Toward the end of 2009, the National Federation of Independent Business revealed in its Small Business Trends Survey that small business owners are decidedly downcast about the future:

* 40% expect retail sales to decline further in the months ahead
* Only about 25% small business owners expect any sales gain in coming months
* Investment and capital spending by small business owners are at historic lows

With a myriad of initiatives likely to create higher taxes and higher energy costs, business owners find themselves wondering if it makes any sense to try to expand their business.

Further, if initiatives to place a price on carbon emissions increase electricity prices, as some groups have predicted, business owners and organizational managers have yet another reason for a feeling of foreboding. An April 2008 study for the Small Business Administration determined that small business (companies with fewer than 50 employees) is hit much harder by energy costs than larger companies (with more than 1,000 employees).

Overall, the small business category pays 35% more for electricity than the sector average for all businesses, while large companies pay 17% less than the average, the study showed.

Energy prices are a threat to the very life of small business in the United States, the study said.

This outlook creates an imperative for small business owners, as well as the owners and managers of midsize businesses and small and large organizations, to scrutinize energy use, reduce energy and water consumption, recycle, and instill green energy practices in the workplace.

But, as a counterbalancing effect, these business owners and organizational managers, faced with limited funds and tight credit, have little if any capital to invest in “greening up” measures. Thus, low-cost measures and adoption of energy- and water-efficient practices are paramount.

Thus, the following Green Workplace Survey emphasizes efficiency improvements that can occur with little or no expenditure of funds.

# 1. LIGHTING

At least 43% of small business owners have taken steps in the last three years to reduce energy bills. Most have engaged in lighting improvements because this area is substantially oriented to behavior modification and smaller investment costs (as opposed to large investments, such as new buildings and new vehicle fleets).

1.1 Are lights turned off when not in use?

1.2 Can switch plate occupancy sensors be installed? (up to 65%-75% energy savings)

1.3 Can compact fluorescent light bulbs be installed in light fixtures?

1.4 Can employees be moved closer to windows for day-lighting advantages?

1.5 Can some lights be removed from fixtures without losing visibility?

1.6 Can schedules be arranged to have employees work from home more?

1.7 Can sun tubes and light shelves be installed (for light and heat) to capture sunlight for more effective use in the workplace?

1.8 Can lower wattage task lighting replace the need for some overhead ambient lighting?

1.9 Can outdoor lighting and indoor “safety” lighting be set on timers?

# 2. HEATING & COOLING

About one-third of business owners in a National Federation of Independent Business survey voiced concern about heating and cooling costs as a leading factor in their energy bills. While system replacements are not likely to be an option for businesses with limited capital budgets, there are steps that can be taken to reduce heating and cooling costs.

2.1 Create a map of the offices, conference rooms, storage and warehouse space, kitchen areas and other space uses in the workplace.

2.2 Is the heating/cooling in these spaces controlled by a master thermostat or individual room thermostat?

2.3 If there is a single master thermostat, is it a programmable type that can be set to reduce heating and cooling to minimal levels during non-work hours?

2.4 If there are individual thermostats for these work spaces, what is the agreed-upon temperature setting? Who has access to the thermostat and is the setting ever changed?

2.5 Are there spaces where heating and cooling are not needed (warehouse, store room)? Do these spaces create drafts into office space (for example, are doors left ajar)?

2.6 Can heating needs of office space be augmented with “daylighting techniques” including the installation of flooring, glass types and glazes and window coverings that help retain heat in the winter and deflect it during the summer?

2.7 Are room fans a feasible option to replace central air as a cooling source on some days? Studies show stirring air produces a satisfactory cooling effect and, on certain occasions, central air is actually too cold for many employees.

2.8 How old is the current heating and cooling system? If it is more than a few years old and funds are available to replace the system, modern Energy Star systems can be 30% to 50% more efficient and may be worth the investment to the business owner or organizational manager.

2.9 Investigate whether ductwork has been cleaned, ventilation systems are function and that there is no evidence of mold in the heating and cooling system on insulation (that might be blown through the central HVAC system). Steps to ensure the HVAC system is not promoting illness among employees can help save an expense that worries business owners and organizational managers the most: higher healthcare insurance, medical costs and lost employee workdays. As in the home, make sure filters are changed regularly.

# 3. PHANTOM ELECTRICITY LOAD

Many electronic devices and models of business equipment in the workplace continue to consume electricity (in power saver mode) even when not in active use. This is called “phantom electricity load,” and is an increasing concern as electronic devices and business equipment proliferate and electricity costs rise. Phantom load can be a factor for the following devices:

* Cable boxes or satellite dish boxes
* VCRs and DVDs
* Computers
* Computer printers
* Cable modems/DSL
* Televisions
* Cell phone chargers plugged into the wall, whether or not a phone is attached
* Microwaves
* Coffee pots

An inexpensive energy monitor (about $30) can be used to determine how much electricity is used per device per hour. These devices should be unplugged when not in use in off-hours, evenings, or weekends.

For each device, therefore, ask:

3.1 Is the device left turned on when not in use?

3.2 Is this necessary?

3.3 Is the device left plugged in when not in use?

3.4 Is this necessary?

3.5 Is the device turned off at night?

3.6 Is the device turned off on the weekends?

3.7 Is a timer or energy monitor installed on the device?

# 4. INDOOR WATER USAGE & WATER HEATING

Many business owners and organizational managers share some of the same concerns that affect home water usage and water heating, such as:

4.1 Check to make sure there are no plumbing leaks (moisture under sinks, standing water).

4.2 Check to see if low-flow and automatic shut-off faucets are installed in all restrooms and kitchen facilities.

4.3 Check to see if low-flow, high efficiency toilets are installed in all restrooms.

4.4 Ensure that there is no water leakage around the hot water tank.

4.5 Provide bottled water service to deter employees from running water at length to obtain cold water to drink.

4.6 Ensure that the water heater has an insulation blanket unless it is a newer model with a high R-value that does not require additional insulation.

4.7 Ensure that the water heater is not located in a cold, drafty place that makes it more difficult for the unit to stay warm. Insulate water pipes.

# 5. OUTDOOR WATER USAGE

For businesses and organizations, outdoor landscaping may be the single biggest source of water consumption. However, there are alternatives. Specifically:

5.1 Can attractive rock or gravel be used to replace some grassy areas around the building

Where there is greenery, can greater use be made of mulch to keep-in moisture?

5.2 Is there a sprinkler system and is it in good working condition?

5.3 Are efforts made to ensure landscape watering is conducting at the cooler parts of the day?

5.4 Can xeriscaping be introduced to create a biosphere of plants, trees, flowers and shrubbery with reduced water needs that coexist harmoniously? Expert counsel on xeriscaping can be expensive, but universities and community colleges increasingly have departments (and students) devoted to ecological disputes. A few phone calls may locate an academic group willing to take on your office landscape as a xeriscaping project.

Vehicle washing is another significant factor in outdoor water usage for some businesses and organizations. Therefore, ask:

5.5 Does the business or organization maintain a vehicle fleet?

5.6 How many cars, vans, and small trucks are in this fleet?

5.7 How many mid-size trucks are in this fleet?

5.8 How many buses or large trucks are in this fleet?

5.9 Are these vehicles usually washed on-site or off-site (by a third-party facility)?

5.10 Is third-party off-site vehicle-washing a cost-effective alternative? Why or why not?

# 6. RECYCLING

Most businesses and organizations produce significant amounts of paper waste, shipping carton waste, ink and toner cartridge waste and more each day—all contributing to the waste stream and higher production/manufacturing and energy costs. Recycling can help reduce life-cycle air and water pollution, carbon emissions, energy use and expenditures for office products.

**Paper**

6.1 How much paper is purchased for the workplace each month? How is it used?

6.2 Is all paper supply of the recycled variety? According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, recycled paper creates 74% less air pollution and 35% less water pollution than paper production directly from trees.

6.3 Can reliance on paper be reduced and reliance on electronic document handling be increased?

6.4 Can incentives be introduced to motivate employees to use less paper?

6.5 Can document copying be limited? Can documents be kept electronically?

6.6 Ensure the company’s name is removed from non-strategic mailing lists and also ensure the accuracy of mailing lists used by the company.

6.7 Can use of paper products in kitchen areas be eliminated (such as paper cups, paper plates, paper towels)?

6.8 Are necessary paper products (such as toilet paper) of recycled material composition?

**General Materials**

6.9 Are there recycle bins in abundance around the workplace to collect cans, paper, plastic and other recyclable materials?

6.10 Is there a formal workplace recycling program and/or an employee team to ensure these efforts are enthusiastically maintained? With the proliferation of environmental groups, it can be an easy matter to find an expert speaker to address workplace recycling and the economic/cost benefits as well as ecological benefits (saving forests, reducing carbon footprint) of this practice.

**Ink Cartridges/Toner Cartridges**

6.10 List all business equipment in the workplace that utilizes ink cartridges and toner cartridges. How many are used by each workstation or piece of equipment each month?

6.11 Can use of ink/toner cartridges be reduced without harming workflow or productivity?

6.12 Can ink/toner cartridges be re-filled instead of replaced with new cartridges?

6.13 Are all used cartridges taken to a local recycler?

**Note:** On February 1, 2009, Staples, the world’s largest office products company, announced implementation of a comprehensive ink and toner cartridge program to serve everyone. In 2009, Staples is expected to recycle 30 million ink and toner cartridges. Other companies, such as Office Depot and OfficeMax, also provide ink and toner recycling programs.

# One final suggestion:

Encourage the business owner or organizational manager to speak frankly with employees about rising energy costs in the workplace and solicit their ideas and suggestions how to reduce energy, water, paper, and supply usage.

There is a growing public awareness of environmentalism. In addition, employees are concerned with helping businesses and organizations to hold down costs if it can help keep their jobs, salaries, and benefits, which is essential to their ability to handle their own budgets.

Employees may be able to offer many suggestions that have escaped the employer’s notice. Suggestions from employees are likely to elicit their buy-in and active support more immediately and with greater longevity than solutions imposed on them without their involvement.