



# Steps on becoming a green business

What are the steps to take if you want to move your business to becoming a more sustainable or "green" one? More and more, consumers are demanding that businesses take the environment into account in their products, practices, and advertising claims. But they want the claims to be real, not exaggerated or deceptive.

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The US government runs a website called Business.gov to connect business owners to sound business practices as well as rules and regulations. A section of that website is devoted to green practices and in particular, the steps to take to become green. The website gives many links with information about each step.

## **Step 1: Comply with Environmental Regulations**

As a green business, you should practice what you preach. The website has an Environment Regulations section of the Green Business Guide for more information.

## **Step 2: Develop an Environmental Management Plan**

Running a green business means creating an environmentally-friendly, energy efficient workplace. It's not enough to just say you are green. A sound environmental plan will help minimize your company's eco-footprint, and encourage green business practices throughout your organization.

## **Step 3: Build Green**

If you are opening a business in a new or remodeled building, make sure you build green and install energy efficient heating and air conditioning systems, appliances, equipment and lighting. There are many resources at the website for more information:"

## **Step 4: Buy Green Products**

Consider buying green products that are:

- Made from post-consumer, recycled materials
- Bio-based
- Non-toxic
- Energy efficient rated products, such as ENERGY STAR®
- Renewable and recyclable
- Locally produced, such as food that is locally grown and organic

## **Step 5: Adopt Energy Efficient Practices**

Good energy management is good business. Given the potentially high returns and minimal risk, implementing energy efficiency practices is at the core of most business environmental management strategies. So many businesses need to pay attention to this step. How many supermarkets do you still see with open freezer or refrigerator cases? Suggest to the management that they do some of the following:

- Conduct an Energy Audit. Whether you are opening a home based business or moving into an existing commercial building, having an energy audit conducted on your facility will help you quickly identify areas where you can save energy costs. See Managing Energy Efficiency Products for more information.
- Purchase ENERGY STAR appliances and office equipment.
- Provide energy saving tips to your employees.
- Look for green power and renewable energy sources.
- Visit the Small Business Guide to Energy Efficiency for more information.

### **Step 6: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Wastes**

Most businesses can save a substantial amount of money by reducing waste. In addition to lower removal costs, waste reduction measures help cut costs on raw materials, office supplies and equipment. Furthermore, by streamlining your operations to reduce waste, you may also be able to enhance your overall efficiency, productivity and public image.

### **Step 7: Conserve Water**

The increased demand on our nation's water supply is threatening human health and the environment. By implementing a water efficiency program, you can not only help conserve this precious resource, but cut your costs associated with buying, heating, treating and disposing of it. Some restaurants still defrost food by running water over it. A leaky faucet can waste 40 gallons of water a day.

### **Step 8: Prevent Pollution**

Every business generates waste. For some, it may be only waste paper or dirty water; for others, it may be hazardous or toxic wastes that require special handling and disposal. Also, you don't have to wait for a regulation to decide it is time to prevent pollution. For example, most restaurants generate tremendous air pollution because the smoke from their stoves and grills goes up into the air unfiltered. In Los Angeles, the largest component to particulate air pollution is meat particles from restaurant smoke stacks. Whatever the type or volume of waste your company generates, it is costing you money. You pay for what you use twice - once when you buy it and the second time when you throw it away. The bottom line is that preventing waste will save you money.

### **Step 9: Create a Green Marketing Strategy**

If you are starting a green business, you need to market yourself as one. Adding "green" claims and eco-labels to your marketing strategy will enhance your brand image and secure your market share among the growing number of environmentally concerned consumers. But don't do it unless you mean it and unless your claims are real. Check out certification organizations carefully before signing up.

### **Step 10: Join Industry Partnership and Stewardship Programs**

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