



9 STEPS TO GREENING YOUR BUSINESS

by

Kevin Slovick

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Become Green, Be Green, Stay Green...

This guide is designed for the small business / home business owner or those who are starting a new business. In this guide, you will learn what it means to be green, some steps you can take to become green, and how to stay green. This guide will show you that there are many shades of green to choose from. It will also cover green certifications and standards (or lack thereof).

The most current version of this guide can be downloaded from our website:
www.FunPhotoGuys.com/Green.htm

Kevin Slovick – Fun Photo Guys®

Following his passion for photography, Kevin Slovick co-founded Fun Photo Guys®, a Certified Bay Area Green Business that focuses on professional digital photography for weddings, engagements, social events, portraits and product shots. With his family and community in mind, Kevin has committed to using green technologies and renewable resources in both his business and personal life. Fun Photo Guys® mission is to be socially and environmentally responsible in the way they source, market, and deliver professional photography services.



Kevin is a life-long Bay Area resident who is committed to helping businesses become greener. He has written a "Green Paper" entitled "9 Steps to Greening Your Business" which was published on StartupNation.com. Fun Photo Guys® is a member of the Bay Area Green Business Program, Green America / Co-Op America, Green Chamber of Commerce, Sustainable Business Alliance, Pleasant Hill / San Ramon Chambers of Commerce, and the Tri-Valley Convention and Visitor's Bureau. Kevin is the Chairman of the Pleasant Hill Chamber of Commerce Green Business Committee, encouraging local businesses to adopt green business practices.

In addition to being an entrepreneur, Kevin has been a Network Systems Engineer, designing and implementing IT data center solutions since 1989. He holds many technology certifications, including MCSE, MCDBA, MCTS, CCNP, and MCNE. Kevin provides IT consulting services to small and medium sized businesses. His work with the Hill Physicians Medical Group has reduced their data center's energy consumption considerably by consolidating more than 120 Windows systems down to eight physical servers using VMware's ESX Server technology, and by replacing older full-size legacy servers with Hewlett Packard's c-Class Blade Server technology.

If all of that doesn't keep him busy enough, Kevin is a father of five, with two older daughters and three young children under the age of four. He sees being green as a necessity for the sustainability of the planet for future generations. His children are counting on him to make a difference.

Kevin is a strong believer that we do not inherit the earth from our parents; instead, we are borrowing it from our children.



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Step 1: Learn what it means to be a green business

In this step, we will learn what it means to be a green business, some terminology, and how to become green. We will ask you to think about what shade of green you are and what shade you want to be.

What is a “Green Business”?

A “Green Business” can be defined as an organization that uses renewable resources (environmentally sustainable) and holds itself accountable for the human resource aspect of their activities (socially responsible). Don’t forget the third criteria; a green business also has to be able to pay the bills (economically sustainable). (See “Triple Bottom Line”)

Being Green requires developing an attitude toward sustainability and practices that can be incorporated into our everyday lives. A business has to change the way it operates, purchases, develops, produces, and provides products and services so it has a positive impact on the environment.

Being a green business means going beyond minimum standards. When it comes to the environment, a green business exceeds all minimum legal standards and goes beyond basic compliance. A green business not only develops practices that are specific to their line of business and keeps up to date on issues specific to their industry; a green business also implements practices that are common to all businesses, such as reducing, reusing, and recycling.

A green business is aware of its consumption of natural resources and takes steps to reduce its consumption, reduce its waste, and use materials more efficiently.

Think of the planet as a warehouse of goods. When you use the goods, you have to pay for them with money or fair trade. When you use the environment’s resources, you have to pay the environment back to offset your consumption.



Why do businesses become “green”?

There is a wide range of motivating factors that can influence businesses to go green. Some of the factors include fear, guilt, money, recognition, and community. What are your motivations?

Fear – In recent years, scientists, politicians, and the news media have built up the fear factor. Some people who have heard about global warming (climate change) on the news want to learn what they can do to help to slow the process and prevent further damage to the environment. Some just want to do the right thing, however, there is a growing fear of disaster that motivates many people.

Some see other businesses successfully going green and fear losing customers. Competition is a strong motivator.

Guilt – As consciousness about the environment awakens in people’s minds, their attitudes and values change. They start to feel guilty. They realize that what they have been doing all these years is harming the environment and suddenly, they want to learn how they can help reverse the effects and restore what they have taken. They are afraid that what we have done has damaged the environment for future generations.

Money – Some see going green as a market trend where they can make money. Some see going green as a cost savings. There are some businesses that are founded on the premise that the green movement will continue to grow and be profitable, such as alternative energy and green products/services. Some green businesses offer special discounts to other green businesses. Going green often brings in more “LOHAS” customers and more money. There are also tax savings for some types of vehicles/fuel.

Recognition – Becoming a green business has its rewards. Green Business Certification is one example of the recognition a green business can achieve. Become certified and display the certification logos, publish an article or have an article written about your business, have a case study written that feature your successes, assist other businesses in becoming green. If your efforts are unique and innovative, you could gain attention in the press.

Community – People like the feeling of belonging that comes from being part of something greater than you are, a large group that shares the same vision, values, goals and objectives. The members of the green community want to help one another by sharing ideas, giving each other advice, and sharing in the knowledge that they are all working together toward reducing our impact on the planet and creating awareness.

Do the right thing – Some people understand the actual benefits to the planet and future generations. They have a strong sense of right and wrong, and are motivated by the desire to “do the right thing”.

Whatever your motivations are, the planet will appreciate your efforts to not only reduce your overall impact on the environment, but your efforts to restore it. As you realize that going green is a winning investment in our future, you can make changes to your business and use it as a tool for positive change. Your business will benefit from any changes you make towards being green.

How do businesses become “green”?

Becoming a green business involves a learning curve where business owners learn how other businesses have changed their business practices, then make changes to their own practices that are appropriate to their line of business. Going green involves determining how your company impacts the environment, your energy and water usage, and the amount of waste you produce. You will also need to review how you qualify the vendors you use and determine how they produce and provide you with products. It can involve voluntary certification.



To Certify or Not to Certify? – That is the question

Becoming a certified green business can be challenging and confusing, as there are no commonly defined standards. There are many certification organizations, each with their own requirements to qualify. They all require you to go beyond achieving basic regulatory compliance and implement additional measures to become green. Some organizations have a standard that they apply to everyone, while others are more flexible and adapt their requirements to your line of business. They all seem to have some common areas for which they judge your business. It's hard for a business owner to decide which certifier to choose or even if it is worth bothering to get certified.

For more information on how to certify a Wedding Service Provider business, check out:
<http://GreenWeddingProviders.com>

Some of the common areas include:

- Complying with all environmental regulations
- Tracking resource use (Water, Waste, Energy, Natural Resources)
- Preventing Pollution
- Conserving energy, water and other natural resources
- Reducing waste
- Controlling chemicals & hazardous materials
- Protecting public health and the environment
- Educating employees and customers
- Introducing green practices to other businesses

Some organizations require you to integrate additional practices such as verifying the fair treatment of the human resources used to produce products you buy, use and sell.

Shades of green

There is a misconception that “becoming a green business” means being a radical “environmentalist” from the “green movement” of the past. This is NOT the case. Think of the old “green movement” as “dark green” and “becoming a green business” as a “bright green”. There are many shades of green in between. You will have to decide what shade of green you want your business to be.

Choosing which shade of green – a practical example of picking a green product

Recently, many companies have chosen to make reusable shopping bags available to their customers. Each has chosen a different approach. Company 'A' chose to provide large bags made of a thick blue plastic material with cloth handles imprinted with their logo. Company 'B' chose to go with black cloth bags with their logo imprinted on the side, and Company 'C' went with small cloth bags made of hemp and had their logo imprinted using soy-based inks. Each company thinks they made a good "green" choice. As you can see from this example, Company 'C' chose the most environmentally friendly product, but is it really the "greenest" if it is too small to hold enough products? Will people continue to use it or just throw it away?

To help you decide what shade you want to be, ask yourself these questions

(There are no wrong answers)

What are my reasons for becoming green?

Are there any market factors involved?

How does being green integrate with my business plan?

How does being green give me a competitive edge?

Am I starting a new green business or am I running an existing business that wants to slowly move toward being green?

Do I want to be 100% green or are there areas I will not be green?

In any area where I cannot go green, how can I offset my consumption?

Do I want to have my business certified as being green?

Are there any green groups in my area, or should I start one?

When choosing to purchase products and services, how do I qualify them as green?

Terminology

When you first encounter Green Businesses, you may run into logos and terminology that are somewhat foreign to you. You have likely seen the “recycling logo” on cans, bottles, and recycle bins. But do you understand the meaning behind it?

Understand the Three R's

The “Three R's” are not the old “Reading wRiting and ‘Rithmetic” we were taught years ago. They stand for the “Three-R's” of the waste hierarchy, Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. The commonly used symbol of the three R's is a logo with three rotating arrows c. To eliminate your carbon footprint, you must Reduce your Consumption and Waste, Reuse what you have, and Recycle everything you can.



What terms do I need to learn?

There are a number of new “green” terms you will need to familiarize yourself with.

Sustainable / Sustainability

“**Sustainability**” refers to three areas, environmental, economic, and social. It is about making choices that meet your needs without compromising the needs of future generations.

“**Environmental Sustainability**” refers to maintaining the quality and longevity of environmental resources used by the business. This can include energy, water, waste management, emissions, etc. If a business puts back 100% of the natural resources it consumes, it is considered an “environmentally sustainable” business. This is because it replenishes the very resources it depends on. If a business consumes more resources than nature can replenish, uses too much energy, or causes excess waste / pollution, it is not considered sustainable.

“**Economic Sustainability**” includes the overall financial model and productivity of a company. The income and expenses must provide for a financially sustainable business. If a business is constantly going deeper into debt, it is not financially sustainable. In our context it also refers to evaluating the products and services you purchase to determine if they are “more sustainable” or “less sustainable”. For example, purchasing energy-saving Compact Florescent Lights (CFLs) is considered a “more sustainable” choice.

“**Social Responsibility**” refers to social impact of a business. It includes ethical principles, giving back to society, health & safety, respect for human rights, equal opportunities, fair compensation, and ensuring a high quality of life. It involves eliminating unethical and corrupt behavior. It involves thoroughly investigating your sources to ensure they provide fair compensation for work performed, provide a safe work environment, and do not violate human rights in the treatment of their workers. It may also include doing things for the local community, educating / helping others, participating in community groups or your local city and chamber of commerce.

“**Carbon Footprint**” refers to your impact on the environment. It refers to measuring how much carbon dioxide does a particular activity, purchase, or product produces. For example, driving a car to the store produces a much larger carbon footprint than does walking to the store, as it produces much more carbon dioxide.

“**Carbon Offsets**” or “**Carbon Credits**” refers to offsetting your carbon footprint instead of reducing your own carbon footprint. This used to mean planting a lot of trees to offset your carbon output. Today, this means purchasing carbon credits from a company that offsets carbon emissions. This is commonly used to compensate for air travel or use of an automobile. For example, if you take a plane to travel somewhere, you can buy carbon offsets to compensate the environment for your production of carbon dioxide. Be careful and thoroughly research a company before buying carbon credits.

“**Certification**” is a voluntary process where a business is thoroughly reviewed by a third-party organization to determine if it has gone beyond basic environmental compliance to conserve resources,

prevent pollution and minimize waste. There are many organizations that certify green businesses, each with its own criteria and qualifications.

“**Greenwashing**” is where a business spends more time, money and effort misleading consumers into thinking they are green than they put toward actually being green. They think more about building a brand than actually doing something that matters to the environment.

“**HHW**” stands for **Household Hazardous Waste**, which can include cleaning chemicals, paint, pool/hot tub chemicals, batteries, oils, antifreeze, herbicides, pesticides, medicines, fluorescent light bulbs and smoke detectors (both contain mercury), any fuel or chemical that can ignite, and consumer electronic devices (such as TVs, computer equipment, cell phones).

“**LOHAS**” stands for “Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability”. It refers to a market segment that focuses on personal health, fitness, environmentally friendly living, social responsibility and justice. These are customers who are interested in seeing your business go green.

“**Triple Bottom Line**” refers to a way to measure a company’s success in the areas of Social sustainability, Environmental sustainability, and Economic sustainability. This is also referred to as “People, Planet, and Profit”.

“**VOC**” refers to Volatile Organic Compounds. These include paints/thinners, dry cleaning chemicals, petroleum products, and tobacco. Sources can also include copy machines, carpets and products containing formaldehyde, such as particle-board-based furniture and cabinets.



Step 2: Reduce consumption, waste, & pollution

In this step, we will review processes and look for ways to reduce consumption of natural resources and ways to eliminate waste, including conserving energy, conserving water, and reducing waste. “Reducing” is the most important of the Three R’s to focus on. It has the biggest impact and can have significant cost savings for your business. Some of the areas with the biggest impact include reducing office waste, transportation, cleaning, and landscaping.

Ideas to reduce energy usage, water consumption and waste:

- Turn off lights, install timers, daytime sensors, or motion sensors to turn off lights automatically
- Replace incandescent bulbs with Compact Florescent Lights (CFLs)
- Replace older florescent fixtures with newer energy-efficient florescent lights
- Reduce packaging waste - buy in bulk or buy items with reduced / recyclable packaging
- Reduce personal travel by consolidating car trips into one, carpool, ride a bike, take public transit
- Reduce business travel by using video / telephone / web conferencing, providing shuttles, encouraging telecommuting, reducing the work week from five 8-hour days to four 10-hour days.
- Keep automobiles well maintained, e.g. change fluids and air filter, keep tires properly inflated
- Reduce junk mail - remove your name from mailing lists: <https://www.dmachoice.org/MPS/>
- Use white boards to replace sticky notes
- Install low-flush toilets and water restrictors on faucets and shower heads.
- Reduce the temperature setting on your water heater to 120° and install an insulation wrap around it
- Improve Landscaping – Repair broken sprinkler heads, adjust timers, install a drip system, eliminate over watering and runoff, plant drought resistant plants, and use mulch to reduce evaporation.
NOTE: Some water companies use certain chemicals to treat the water that can be harmful to fish. Reducing runoff may be a requirement in your area.
- Avoid using disposable products, paper plates / napkins / towels, plastic utensils, cups
- Choose longer lasting products
- Buy energy efficient appliances and durable goods
- Buy locally produced goods and buy from local stores
- Avoid purchasing products that have a lot of packaging or have to be shipped to you
- Change the chemicals you purchase to ones that have lower impact on the environment, including cleaning supplies, paint, pest control, fertilizer, etc.
- Chemical Management: Reduce the amounts of hazardous chemicals that you purchase and store to the absolute minimum. Keep chemicals in properly sealed containers stored in a locked closet. Keep an up to date MSDS binder nearby in case of accidents or spills.
- Have appliances cleaned and serviced regularly to improve performance. Clean your dryer filter after each use and have the exhaust duct cleaned at least annually. Vacuum behind/under refrigerators to improve air-flow. Make sure to defrost small refrigerators frequently to prevent ice build-up and improve performance. Make sure there is proper space around appliances that need to dissipate heat.
- Set the power save mode on electronic devices, including computers, printers, fax machines & copiers.
- Print less, mail less, e-mail more. Try e-mail marketing to your existing customers.
- Try taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Get some exercise while saving energy.
- Avoid advertising in newspapers, magazines, and sending out mail unless you are sure of reaching your target audience, as these are wasteful. Try electronic means instead.
- Choose not to print a receipt at the ATM and use online banking and electronic statements.
- Add a line at the bottom of your e-mail signature asking users to consider the environment before printing it. It serves as a constant reminder to others not to waste paper.
e.g. 🌱 Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail



Step 3: Reuse what you have

In this step, we will look for ways to reuse items. This may require changing your existing methods and replacing disposable items with reusable alternatives. Reusing also means taking an item you can't use anymore and redistribute it to someone who can put it to good use, repair it, refurbish or remanufacture it.

Ideas for reusing items:

- Purchase reusable products instead of disposable, such as rechargeable batteries, washable towels
- Purchase used products, it saves money and provides a path for reuse
- Save packing material you receive and reuse for shipping
- Reuse newspapers as packing material for shipping or moving
- Use white boards and e-mail to replace sticky notes
- Print on both sides of the paper
- Write notes on scrap paper
- Reuse binders and file folders
- Use reusable shopping bags, provide reusable bags to your customers
- Use resealable containers instead of plastic bags
- Refill ink and toner cartridges
- Use washable towels, cloth napkins, and table cloths instead of disposables
- Reuse clothing by donating them, turning them into doll's clothes or using them as rags
- If you can't reuse an item, sell it or donate it so someone else gets use out of it. Examples include eBay, Craig's List, charitable thrift stores, salvage yards, food banks, toys for tots, used equipment stores, and eWaste drop-offs.
- Repair, Refurbish, Remanufacture – The following are examples of items that can be repaired, refurbished, or remanufactured into something useful: Toner/Ink cartridges, single-use cameras, appliances, electronic equipment
- Avoid reusing items designed for one-time use, such as plastic water/soda bottles. Studies have shown that reuse of these can release chemicals when they are in less than perfect condition.



Step 4: Recycle everything you can

In this step, we will go through all processes methodically to see if everything that can be recycled is being recycled. Recycling involves taking items that are at the end of their useful life and giving them to a recycler who can turn them into raw material to make something else. Recycling reduces waste, pollution, and saves energy. Review all waste products to see if any can be eliminated or replaced with recyclable alternatives.

You are probably already doing some form of basic recycling. Cans, bottles, plastics, paper, cardboard can all be recycled easily. Most garbage companies offer recycle bins of some sort to both regular businesses and home-based businesses. Some only offer large cardboard recycling bins while others offer mixed paper or plastic and can recycling too. Check with your local waste company for details on their offerings.

Determine if there are any other items you can recycle. One way to do this is to take a look in your garbage bin right before it is picked up. See if any materials are being disposed of that could be recycled instead.

Ideas for recycling:

- Choose to buy recycled and recyclable products
- Purchase paper with at least 30% recycled content. Try 100% recycled content, but it may cause excess jams in some older printers/copiers.
- Recycle paper, cardboard, glass, aluminum cans, plastics (see next section), bottles, etc
- Recycle plastic grocery bags by returning them to the store, or better yet, bring your own reusable bag to the store with you
- Avoid purchasing juice “boxes”, as they are made up of a complex mixture of paper, plastic and metal that is difficult to recycle
- Avoid Styrofoam cups, dishes and take-out food containers, as they are typically not recyclable!
- Recycle ink & toner cartridges and buy refilled cartridges. HP provides return envelopes with many of their products and some office supply stores offer discounts if you return cartridges.
- Make recycling easy for your staff by placing clearly labeled recycle bins in convenient locations around the facility
- Recycle all batteries – From tiny watch batteries to car batteries, all size batteries can be recycled
- Recycle E-Waste* – Televisions, Cellular Phones, PDAs, iPods, Computers, Video Game Consoles, Sound Systems, Consumer Electronics
- Recycle Paint – Can be recycled by reprocessing or reblending
- Recycle automotive fluids, tires and car batteries
- Recycle eyeglasses
- Florescent lighting products contain mercury that cannot be processed by normal curbside recycling. Recycle florescent tubes and CFLs by taking them to a designated recycling center or hardware store that has a recycle bin specifically for florescent lighting products.
- Save packing material you receive and reuse for shipping
- Save yard waste and organic kitchen scraps for use in Composting
- Recycle old appliances. If recycling an old refrigerator or air conditioner, make sure that the recycler can handle removing the refrigerant properly.

*Remember, E-Waste cannot simply be thrown away or placed in a recycle bin. It must be processed by an eWaste recycler.

Recycling Plastics:

The importance of recycling plastic or switching to biodegradable non-plastic alternatives cannot be understated. Plastic is a growing disaster for the environment. Plastics are made from non-renewable resources extracted and processed using energy-intensive techniques. Plastic packaging is a huge source of waste in our landfills and is eaten by animals.

Many states require that plastics have numbers stamped on the bottom of them to identify how they should be recycled. This system was developed by the Society of the Plastics Industry (SPI) in 1988 to allow consumers and recyclers differentiate between different types of plastics to help facilitate recycling. Check with your local waste company to determine which numbers can/can't be recycled.



#1 PETE (PolyEthylene Terephthalate) includes clear single-use water / soda / juice bottles, meal trays, salad dressing, mayo/miracle whip containers, and some cleaners



#2 HDPE (High-Density PolyEthylene) includes milk/water jugs, detergent bottles, cereal box liners, and grocery bags



#3 V or PVC (Vinyl or PolyVinyl Chloride) includes toys, non-food retail packages, plastic food wrap, binders, shower curtains, medical tubing, some baby bottle nipples, plastic pipes, bottles used for cooking oil, shampoo, window cleaner, peanut butter and some squeezable bottles (honey, mustard)



#4 LDPE (Low-Density PolyEthylene) includes dry cleaning bags, produce bags, frozen food bags, most plastic wraps, and some squeezable bottles



#5 PP (PolyPropylene) includes medicine bottles, aerosol caps, drinking straws and food containers (such as yogurt, ketchup bottles and sour cream/butter/hummus tubs)



#6 PS (PolyStyrene) includes Styrofoam (packing peanuts, egg cartons, coffee cups, take-out food containers), compact disc jackets, plastic tableware, and some yogurt containers



#7 "Other" is a catch-all category that covers anything that is not categorized by 1-6. It includes both dangerous and safe plastics. It includes reusable water bottles, baby bottles, sippy cups, certain kinds of food containers and Tupperware. It also includes CD/DVDs, cell phones, ABS pipes / Lego toys / golf club heads, automotive parts, and head gear.

*#1 PETE and #2 HDPE are the most common forms of plastic, so they are the easiest types to find locations where they are accepted for recycling.



Step 5: Learn how going green can save money

In this step, we will review the short and long term costs associated with going green. We will give you examples of how going green can save your business money. This will include the concept of “TCO” and how to justify greener purchases in your business. We will cover the concept of “Greenwashing” and the serious detriment it can be to your business.

Myth: Going Green will cost my business more money

Many small businesses think in terms of short term cash flow. The challenge comes in retraining small businesses to think in terms of the long term benefits. Some measures, such as recycling and reducing waste cost little or no up front money, and can reduce your waste disposal costs. Green products can cost more short term money up front, but will typically save money in the long term. If you do it right, you can save money and save the planet at the same time. Assess each of your purchases to determine where going green is a more cost effective choice for your business.

The cost savings from reducing your energy usage is exponential. Not only will your electric bills go down, you may save enough energy each month to move to a lower rate tier with your electric company. Computers are a very big energy consumer. Make sure to enable all power management features on computers, monitors, printers, fax machines and copiers.

The cost of not going green

The reality of today’s green market trend is that if you ignore the trend or choose **not** to go green, it can cost you customers and potentially cost you your business! Your image in the community is at stake. Consumers are leaning more towards green products and services, which can hurt your business if you aren’t going green.

“Greenwashing” – The cost of faking it

Consumers are smart and their perception of your values is an important factor. They can see right through token attempts to go green, and will pass you by if they detect that you aren’t truly committed to going green. Word of mouth is a powerful tool that can help make or break a business. If you decide to go green, research it, commit the right resources to it, and do it right. Never Greenwash your marketing materials or advertising. It can and will backfire on you.

Myth: It is overwhelming, too complex, costly and will take too much time

Do you think the goal of going green exceeds your ability or capacity to implement the changes required? Do you think that constraints on money or time will keep you from taking action? Take small steps. You don’t have to become green overnight. Many areas of the company may not understand the need to change or may resist change. They may come up with all sorts of reasons not to change, most of which are based on the fear of changing their ways. Businesses must change to stay competitive. Overcome fear and obstacles. Be patient and persistent. Once people start to see the benefits, they will join in.

TCO: Choosing Green Can Save Money

Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) is an evaluation of how much you will pay for an item over the entire life of the product. This is an important measure for a green business because if you

compare two similar items before a purchase, the greener item may look like it will cost more initially. A TCO analysis may show that a greener option saves you money in the long term.

TCO Example 1: Is wooden deck material a “greener” choice than a composite material made of recycled plastic and reclaimed wood?

If you are replacing a wooden deck, and a plank of redwood costs \$10 and a plank of recycled composite costs \$15, you can quickly do the math and figure the entire deck would cost 50% more to go with the composite. On the surface, your initial thought of “going green” might be that wood is a more natural choice than composite. However, if you take into account the entire life of the product, the deck wood will require staining periodically, will only last for 15 years, and will require hazardous disposal (due to the chemicals in the stain). The composite product retains its appearance, does not require staining, lasts 30 years, is made from recycled materials that can be recycled at end of its useful life, and does not require hazardous disposal. During the 30 years, you would have to replace the chemically-treated wood deck twice, costing 50% more than the composite. If you add the cost of periodic staining and labor to install it twice over the 30 year period, the wooden deck will cost you even more. The cost to the environment of cutting down trees and disposing of the hazardous treated wood is immeasurable.

TCO Example 2: Compact Florescent Lights

CFLs may cost more initially, but they will reduce energy usage significantly and last longer than incandescent bulbs. They come in a variety of form factors to fit just about any lamp or fixture.

Example 3: Failure to change to meet market needs can be a recipe for business failure

Some legacy film photographers won't change to digital cameras. They have always done it that way and they see no reason to change. They stick with the old business model of taking pictures, providing “proofs”, keeping the negatives and charging for every print. The market has moved toward digital images and the Internet. Many of these legacy photographers are finding their customers have left them and have switched to more modern photographers who provide the digital images. I spoke to a woman who runs bridal fairs. She told me that she has been slowly losing her long-standing photographers over the past five years, some due to the prevalence of digital cameras and some because they would not switch away from film and the legacy photography business model. I have seen many long-standing brick and mortar photography studios go out of business in the past few years.



Step 6: Green your business from the ground up

In this step, we will go beyond the Three R's and learn how to apply what we've learned to the core business itself. We will list things you can do to make your business greener from the ground up. Make sure to enlist the company's top-level management!

Develop a Green Mission, Vision and Values Statement – State what you believe, your company's "green" behavior, your core priorities and purpose for going green, and how your organization rises above others by being green.

Integrate "Green" Into the Business Plan – If you are a new business, this is the perfect time to integrate being green into the business plan. If you are an established business, it is time to revisit your business plan and rethink your strategy. Clearly state the ways in which your products or service offerings will be green as well as how the way you do business will be green. State how Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) plays a factor in your purchasing decisions. Make your plan convenient, simple, and cost-effective. Make it easy for everyone to participate and make it clear that you expect them to participate.

Promote being green on your website – Add a separate web page that outlines all that you do to be green. Provide links to any green organizations you belong to. This is a good place to promote your green mission statement.

Add a logo and tag line to promotional materials – Are you certified? Say so! It doesn't have to be wordy. Something as simple as "<company name> is a certified green business" will get the point across succinctly. Make sure to add any logos that you are certified to use. "Become Green, Be Green, Stay Green..."

Join a group! Get listed! – If you are a certified green business you might consider joining an organization that supports being green and adding your business listing to appropriate websites that promote green businesses. If you are trying to become green, these organizations provide good resources, forums, and ideas on how to solve your particular challenge. There are a number of reputable organizations to choose from.

Green your Marketing efforts – Get a business website and e-mail address. Have professional business cards printed on recycled paper and use an environmentally responsible print shop. The same goes for any brochures, flyers, or other printed materials you will use. Leverage e-mail, telephone, voice mail, forums, blogs, and online advertising technologies to help promote your business instead of printed media and mailings. Avoid mass mailing, printed newspapers/magazines and the printed yellow pages. If you do mail out advertisements, use cards or tri-folds instead of envelopes.

Advertise carefully – Be prudent about where you spend your advertising money. There are a number of sites out there that are only in it for the "green" advertising dollars. There are even predatory companies that will contact you and try to talk you into featuring your business on their TV show or in their magazine. They will of course have to charge you for TV time or ad space in a little-known magazine. Most sites that list green businesses have low-cost listings available or simply want a reciprocal link on your website, while others offer green content and have paid advertising. Do the research, check them out carefully, and don't get burned. Try starting out slow by getting listed on a few low-cost popular sites to see what the response will be before committing a lot of money to a more costly listing.

Green your Purchases – Buying green materials, products and services from local certified green businesses keeps the cycle going and helps you stay green. For items you use a lot of, buy in bulk. For items you use infrequently, but only what you need.

Green your Bills – Send electronic bills or e-mail .PDF invoices to your clients instead of sending printed copies in the mail. Develop online forms instead of paper ones. Scan in forms or contracts and e-mail them. Perform banking transactions electronically online or via phone.

Make it easy and obvious – Provide clearly marked recycle bins in convenient locations. Provide recyclable materials next to each printer/copier/fax machine. Change the default settings on printers and copiers to automatically duplex (print double sided) print jobs. Stock the supply cabinet with office products containing at least 30% recycled content, such as paper, letterhead, folders, envelopes, tissues, paper towels, etc.

Become part of the Green Community – Being green makes you part of the green community. Post a question on a green forum to see what others have done. You will find that the green community has a lot of helpful ideas to offer your growing business.

Encourage others – Offer discounts to other green businesses. Share your successes with other businesses. Offer incentives to those who are trying to be green, such as discounts to other certified green businesses. If you serve drinks, offer a discount to those who bring their own cups. If you have a store front, offer a discount to those who bring their own shopping bags. Use your business to promote being green to your employees, suppliers, customers and the community.

Communicate and Educate – Maximize participation by getting the word out! Teach everyone in your company about your green mission statement, the “Three-Rs” (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle), and leverage their help in making changes to your business processes. You will find that they have a great deal to offer when it comes to ideas for greening their workplace. Communicate with your staff via e-mail to let them know how they can participate. Give people a reason to do it and a direction to go. Give them periodic reminders and a pat on the back when they do well.

Build Green Champions – Both large and small organizations can benefit from building green champions among their company's rank and file. It is easy to find workers who care deeply about green issues, tap their enthusiasm and enlist them to participate on a voluntary basis. You will find many employees are passionate about being green and eager to make suggestions about reducing energy usage, improving recycling, and boosting water conservation. These green-minded employees gain satisfaction knowing that they can make a difference in greening their work environment. They thrive on recognition from superiors when their suggestions lead to real savings and green improvements.

Tips for Building Green Champions

- Keep it simple and easy to understand
- Be specific about the expectations and goals. They need to know what they're getting into. The more they know up front, the more likely you will find the right people to participate.
- Check out new ideas before moving ahead with changes. You need to verify that an idea is safe and will result in truly sustainable improvements.
- Create a reward system to encourage volunteers. It isn't necessarily about monetary rewards; it's about public recognition of their efforts.



Step 7: Develop and Implement a Green Checklist

It's time to turn your visions and goals into reality. In this step, we will review the development and implementation of a green checklist. You should designate someone in your organization as a "Green Business Coordinator" and assign them the responsibility of performing a self-audit against your checklist annually.

It is naïve to think that your business can go green overnight. You need to decide which green initiatives are appropriate to implement in your line of business. You need to develop a plan to incrementally boost the green qualities of your business by adopting environmentally sensitive practices over time. This is where a customized green checklist comes in.

Develop a customized checklist – The checklist should be specific to your business needs and goals. Generic checklists can be used as a start, but each business is unique in their departmental structures, areas of responsibility, and the products and services they use.

Review your utility bills, including electricity, gas, water, and solid waste disposal. Make a chart to show your progress in each area. For example, graph your Electricity usage for the past six months and then each month update it to show how much you are saving.

Include ideas to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle throughout your organization. Include replacing disposable products with reusable and recyclable products. List several ways to reduce energy usage, water consumption and waste. Review lighting, bathrooms, kitchens, landscaping, printers/copiers, paper products, cleaning products, office supplies and all consumables.

Reduce Hazards – Just about every organization has hazardous materials, chemicals and waste products that cannot be recycled or disposed of without special handling. Include a section on your checklist for purchasing, proper handling and storage of hazardous materials and cleaning chemicals. Look carefully! You might not think something is hazardous and just throw it away. Example: You might think that it is okay to dispose of wooden deck material in a trash can. Wood is a natural product, right? If the wood has ever been stained, chemically treated, or painted, it has chemicals in it that can make it hazardous waste.

Cover the five major areas:

- Environmental Compliance (Health, Fire, Air Quality, Wastewater/Storm Drains)
- Waste Reduction
- Pollution Prevention (includes Hazardous Materials/Waste Management)
- Water Conservation
- Energy Conservation

Get Certified! – There are a number of example checklists available online through the various green business programs. Simply do a search on "green business checklist" to find them. If you are trying to get certified, you will want to contact the organization or local green business program and use the checklist they require for your market segment.

Purchase Green – Whenever you purchase something new, replace or repair something, review it against the checklist to see if it meets your established green guidelines. Is it durable, reusable or recyclable?

Step 8: Review Your Processes

In this step, you will need to review each process and procedure in your business. This includes the entire product lifecycle, including product selection, purchasing, use, disposal, and your impact on the environment. To help stimulate your creative juices, we will ask you questions to help you come up with ideas to review your processes and procedures.

Purchasing

Do you review all the options when making purchases? Remember that TCO is an important factor when making purchasing decisions. Purchase Reusable or Recyclable items. When replacing something, consider how you are reusing, recycling or disposing of the old item.

Product Use and Storage

Are you using items completely or throwing them away before getting 100% of their useful life?

Are you using products and disposing of them in the safest manner?

Are you storing products so that they are safe from damage?

Are you storing all of your cleaning supplies and chemical products in a secure location? Think of baby-proofing your home. If you had a toddler, would you leave chemicals out where they could get into them or in an unlocked cabinet, such as under the sink? In your business, you should keep cleaning supplies and hazardous chemicals secure in a locked cabinet or closet designated for chemical storage.

End of Life – Reuse, Recycle or Dispose of items

Are you finding ways to reuse the products you already have?

How can you make sure you are recycling everything you can?

Have you contacted your local waste company to find out what they accept for recycling?

Are you disposing of any hazardous chemicals or waste?

Review Your Impact On The Environment

How are your product/service offerings impacting the environment?

Are you purchasing harmful/toxic items for use in your business?

Are you using your vehicles efficiently and have a plan to replace them with more efficient vehicles as they wear out?

How do your suppliers impact the environment when providing you with products and services?

Are you encouraging your suppliers to be greener?

Review Your Processes and Procedures Annually

It is important that you keep up with the current trends, products and services available to help your business stay as green as it can be. Identify new ways to be greener and expand your program. Develop an awards program to reward and recognize staff participation and program improvement.



Step 9: Training, Education, Promotion & Networking

In this step, we will list ways you can use your business to promote positive environmental and social change. Building synergy with employees, customers, and other businesses will be a key factor in your success. You will learn ways to promote your business while taking the environment into account.

Going green is like a big wave. To keep it moving, it is important for each of us to continue learning about how we can change our ways and to share that information with others. You can use your business as a tool to educate others. In the process, it promotes your business as a positive role model in the business community.

Ideas for promoting eco-friendly practices:

Educate and motivate your employees – Develop a training program that shows ways employees should Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Include steps such as turning off lights in rooms that aren't being used, recycling paper, cans, bottles, and make sure to cover proper equipment use, such as power saving settings on computers, copiers, and printers. You might want to provide ongoing incentives to encourage participation. Some tools available to you may include the employee manual/handbook, new employee orientation, newsletters/bulletins, and your internal website (if you have one). You might also consider adding employee participation in your green business program to job descriptions and performance appraisals.

Educate and encourage your customers – Through the sale of your products or services, you can let your customers know the importance of going green. Provide them with information on how they can use your products or services in a greener way. Set an example by using green recyclable marketing materials. Use greener methods of advertising, such as e-mail marketing, online advertising, electronic newsletters. If you have to use paper advertising, avoid newspapers, magazines, and mailings unless you are sure you will hit your target market effectively. Those methods can be expensive to you and the environment. Try advertising in local newsletters for the chambers of commerce, convention and visitor's bureau and other business and community groups in cities surrounding your service area.

Be a good neighbor – Assist at least one other business with becoming green. Help them learn the steps to becoming green. Share your knowledge and experience with them. Take them on a tour of your office to show them what you have done.

Green your suppliers – Work with suppliers that are green businesses. Ask your suppliers how they are green or ask them to share their plans to go green with you. You might be able to build synergy and help each other out in ways you never thought of.

Get Organized – Join organizations that are committed to the environment, such as Green America / Co-op America, your local chapter of the Sustainable Business Alliance (SBA), or the national Green Chamber of Commerce. See what local resources are available to you and take advantage of that synergy. Join the local chamber of commerce and use them as a forum. Network with other green businesses and share your success stories.

The Reuse Network – The "Reuse" step involves transferring items you can't use anymore to someone who can still find use in the item. Do you have surplus materials? Use your network of green contacts to share items you can't use anymore. Others may have items you can use as well. If you can't find local resources, consider selling your items through online auctions.

For Larger Employers – Encourage car pooling, mass transit, biking and walking. Provide a shuttle service to large offsite events. Provide lockers and showers for employees who walk/jog/bike to work. This also helps encourage healthy exercise habits on breaks. Offer a secure location to store bicycles.

Green Resources and References

Earth 911 – Environmental Resources

www.Earth911.org

GreenBiz – Information and Resources for Businesses

<http://www.GreenBiz.com>

Green Search Engine

www.GreenMaven.com

ReDO – The Reuse Development Organization

<http://www.redo.org/>

Green Business Definition

www.reference.com/search?q=green%20business

Eco-Friendly Reusable Bags

www.EcoBags.com

Plan an Environmentally and Socially Responsible Wedding

www.GreenEleganceWeddings.com

How to Become a Green Photographer

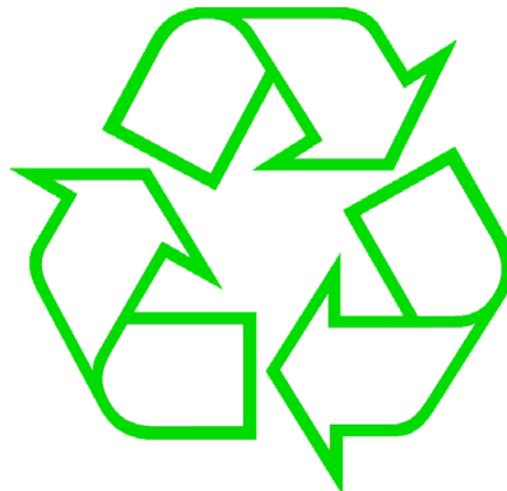
www.PopPhoto.com/americanphotofeatures/4549/become-a-green-photographer.html

News and articles from Discovery Communications

www.treehugger.com

Western Digital Energy Saving GreenPower Hard Drives

<http://www.wdc.com/en/products/greenpower/index.asp?language=en>



Sites Dedicated to Stopping Junk Mail

www.StopJunkMail.org

www.GreenDimes.com

Green Office Supplies

Marcal – Paper Products, Paper Towels, Napkins, Facial/Bathroom Tissue, Wax Paper

<http://www.marcalpaper.com/>

Method – Cleaning Products

www.MethodHome.com

Planet – Cleaning Products

www.PlanetInc.com

Seventh Generation – Cleaning/Laundry/Dishes, Paper Products, Diapers/Wipes

www.SeventhGeneration.com

Shaklee – Cleaning Products

www.Shaklee.com

Simple Green – Cleaning Products

www.SimpleGreen.com

Excellent Packaging & Supply – Retail Packaging, Bio-Cutlery / Utensils, Janitorial Supplies

www.ExcellentPackaging.com

Small Business Resources

Startup Nation - by entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs

One-stop shop for entrepreneurial success; Online content & community resource for entrepreneurs

www.StartupNation.com

We are proud to be a



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Bay Area Green Business Program

The Green Business Program recognizes businesses that: Comply with all environmental regulations and take steps to conserve natural resources, prevent pollution, and reduce waste.

www.GreenBiz.ca.gov



Green America / Co-op America

Green America's mission is to harness economic power—the strength of consumers, investors, businesses, and the marketplace—to create a socially just and environmentally sustainable society.

www.GreenAmericaToday.org



GenGreen Life

The goal of GenGreen is to be the most comprehensive and diverse resource available for people looking to live a locally-focused, environmentally conscious lifestyle.

www.GenGreenLife.com



Green Chamber of Commerce

The Mission of the Green Chamber of Commerce is: "To promote the success of businesses committed to environmental and social responsibility."

www.GreenChamberOfCommerce.net



The Sustainable Business Alliance

The mission of the Sustainable Business Alliance is: Promoting sustainable business practices, Nurturing the environmentally-committed business sector, Advocating for environmentally progressive policies and programs.

www.SustainableBiz.org



Green Wedding Providers

makes it easier for couples to learn how to decrease the impact of their wedding on the planet. Their tips, articles, and certification programs make it easier for wedding providers to learn how to use sustainable business practices.

GreenWeddingProviders.com