



4 Green Improvements Your Company Can Make Today

Converting into a sustainable business may seem like a complicated, drawn-out process, but it doesn't require overhauling the entire company. A series of small, incremental shifts can yield surprising results in reducing a business's environmental footprint. These everyday adjustments can also have far-reaching benefits for the bottom line.

Just a few operational changes can help the Earth while improving your company's [standing among customers](#), as well as boosting its reputation with current and potential employees. Showing a commitment to the environment can motivate purchasing decisions among 45 percent of customers, and 66 percent of global customers are willing to pay more to work with sustainable brands. Plus, employees are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs if they're working for a company that's green, which aids with talent recruitment and retention.

Building out a sustainability program begins with thinking about how each item in your office is used—from paper and drink products to lighting and electronics. Here are four simple steps you can implement today to help your business minimize its impact on the environment and maximize its sustainability.

1) Ditch the Paper

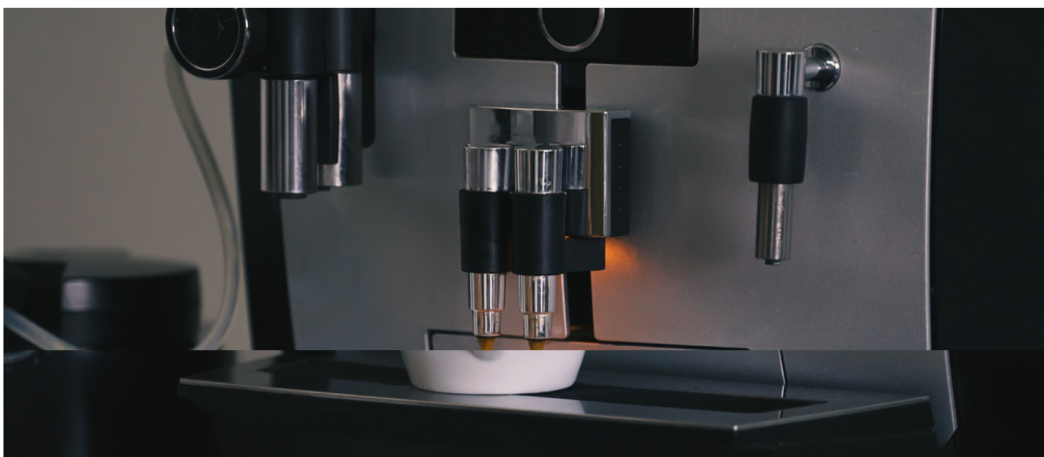




One of the easiest changes to make in the switch to sustainability is reducing paper consumption. That can mean adopting paperless invoicing, relying more on electronic communication, and printing only when it's necessary. Another important step involves using movable whiteboards during meetings and around the office instead of paper handouts.

If you're ready to go completely paper-free, consider instituting a paperless policy across the organization and using recycled paper for printing. This principle is a key part of the flexible workspace approach. For example, Knotel has initiatives designed to eliminate paper goods and provide print-less alternatives at its locations.

2) Find a Better Way to Beverage



It's no secret that plastic water bottles are clogging our oceans, beaches, and landfills. But your business doesn't have to add to the piles of plastic. Encourage your staff to use reusable water bottles that they can fill at your office's filtered water station. Even better, hand out reusable water bottles emblazoned with your company logo to remind people about your move toward sustainability.

When it comes to the other office favorite—coffee—start by using recycled paper filters, purchasing fair-trade beans, and composting coffee grounds. These practices not only help the environment, but also improve ethical sourcing through the supply chain.

At Knotel, vendors pay above industry rates for eco-friendly coffee, which eliminates reduce their water consumption. When you purchase fair-trade coffee for your office, you're helping yourself and the larger global community.

3) Eliminate E-Waste





Recycling is more than aluminum cans and plastic bins; it's about working to eliminate one of the fastest growing types of trash: electronic waste, or "e-waste." Instead of disposing of batteries in the garbage bin, which eventually leads to more landfill, have an employee or a carting service deposit your old batteries at a dedicated e-waste center.

And instead of throwing out older tech, donate your company's obsolete computers, tablets, smartphones, printers, and monitors to schools or charities. Much of the technology that ends up in landfills can be reused by the community, or sold by non-profits to support good causes.

[Habitat for Humanity](#) takes donations, including appliances and office furnishings, and sells them to help keep them out of landfills. Better yet, signing up for a renewable furniture subscription service like [Geometry](#) can help your business reduce or eliminate the furnishings, including workstation items, that would normally be dumped.

Of course, some disposal is unavoidable, so Knotel uses a LEED-accredited trash vendor to remove unwanted items from a workspace and donates or recycles them to help businesses stay eco-friendly.

4) Get Smart About Lighting and Plumbing



With a few easy-to-implement changes, you can dramatically reduce your business's impact on the energy grid. Swap in mercury-free LED lightbulbs in workspaces, use natural light and desk lamps, and consider installing light switch timers that turn off lights in unused rooms.

In addition to lighting, consider investing in low-flow toilets, faucet aerators, EcoPower plumbing, energy-efficient appliances, and LEED certification to increase your efficiency with natural resources. Plus, the simple stamp of LEED certification approval gives your business green credibility while creating a healthy workspace your employees love to be in.

Going green doesn't have to break your budget. These small, cost-efficient operational changes can go a long way toward making your company more sustainable. And by incorporating [flexible workspace strategies](#) into your company's long-term planning, you can ensure that your business becomes a more responsible shepherd of the Earth and its resources.



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CONTACT US

646.979.0898

hellohello@knotel.com

228 Park Ave S #90047

New York, New York

10003-1502 US