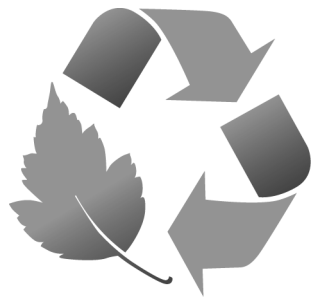
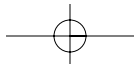
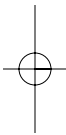
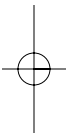


SECTION 1

Embrace the Basics







1 *Embrace Green*

There are numerous suggestions throughout this book (100 more to be precise) that will help you turn your business green, make it sustainable, or environmentally friendly.

Whatever you call it, you can follow the examples, use the referenced websites and make the changes to become a greener business. There are volumes of material online, in libraries, and in bookstores that explain the greenhouse effect, pollution, and global warming and include all of the other need-to-know data that presents one overwhelming argument in favor of helping the planet now and for future generations. In fact, simply renting and watching Al Gore's movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*, can provide eye-opening support for going green.

None of this great volume of gathered data, however, can hit home unless you embrace the concept (and the fact) that this is no longer the whim of a few scientists or ecology fanatics, but a very real, truly global crisis that needs the attention of all business owners, including you.

Sure, your small or midsize business has been running well, and you do not want to tamper with success. And yes, it's true that you will not make the same carbon impact upon the earth as a multibillion-dollar corporation. BUT, since more than 80 percent of businesses in the United States are of the small to midsize-business variety, together, these business owners can make a significant difference. The key is getting onboard, if for no one else, for your customers or clients, many of whom are becoming environmentally savvy and want to deal with businesses that believe as they do. Surveys routinely show that more and more people are doing business with companies that have similar beliefs to their own, and that environmental and socially responsible companies are reaping greater rewards.



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Your first step in embracing a greener business is to understand that the overall goal isn't just to plant trees, save water, or eat organic foods, but to recognize that earth's bounties are being used up, worn out, and polluted at a rate that is dangerous for the next generation. While science has found ways to extend life, we have also jeopardized the environment. The idea of becoming sustainable is simply giving back what is being taken from the earth, replenishing it, and leaving the earth in the same condition that you found it. That is what it means to be green: to ensure the lifeline of the products you use, sell, and/or manufacture from the earth, are returned to the earth in a sustainable manner.

Take Your First Steps

First, start by taking a look at your current business practices and make a mental or written list (on recyclable paper) of the areas in which you believe you are wasting energy, polluting the environment, or acting in a socially irresponsible manner. What are your current business practices and how, if you were a greener company, would you change your methods of conducting business to be more environmentally sensitive?

What changes can you make that would set the wheels in motion to become an environmentally conscious business and at what cost?

To embrace the concept of becoming a greener business, you need to dedicate your efforts across the board to making changes that are both practical for your business, cost-effective, and sustainable. Unlike the desire to leave your mark on the business world, or make a mark in your industry, you are trying to avoid leaving a mark on the planet. Can you run a business that leaves the planet the same as if your business was never there? That's the challenge you need to embrace to grow a highly successful business, that is not at the expense of the earth.

Embrace the concept and read on to see 100 practical ways to re-color your business a shade of green.

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2 *Make a Time Commitment for Greening Your Business*

While it may not sound like much, and does not have the green technology of solar panels or the immediate results of a desk-side recycling system, the commitment to make the time for sustainability is one of the earliest and most significant steps you can take toward becoming a green business.

The majority of surveys indicate that time and budget constraints are the two primary reasons why individuals and companies do not implement a more environmentally conscious lifestyle or approach to business. In some cases, it is difficult to meet the budgetary needs of certain green programs. However, there are many low-budget, cost-effective steps that can be taken, such as passive solar power, to enhance the green contribution of your company.

Time is something we all have. It is a precious commodity, that if used correctly, can allow us to make a significant difference with the goals and accomplishments we choose to strive toward. The entrepreneur who takes the time to work diligently on a business plan, is utilizing his or her time to build a forthcoming business and subsequently, can meet their goals. Likewise, the company that sets out to become a greener entity must utilize time efficiently to make environmental goals a reality.

The question is not: Do you have the time to go green? but, rather: Will you make the time commitment to go green?

Sustainable business models all point to a team effort and a group approach. This may mean sacrificing a lunch hour or two each week, or a few hours after work, to help take part in the planning and implementation of green initiatives. It may mean simply taking those extra few seconds to shut off the air conditioner, open a window, rid your computer of your energy gobbling screen saver, set your printer to print on both sides of the page, or wash your dish or

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mug in the lunch room rather than tossing a plastic plate or Styro-foam cup into the trash. From changing the many minuscule habits that take a few extra seconds to taking part in a company-wide plan to become greener, there needs to be a conscious commitment to slow down just long enough to think sustainability.

For a business owner, the commitment to larger projects, such as switching to a solar energy source or shopping for a hybrid company car, needs to be factored into the agenda and considered a long-term means of energy and cost savings.

Time can be broken down into the next five seconds, minutes, hours, or days, or it can be looked at over a course of the next five, ten, or fifteen years. Any entrepreneur who believes in his or her business, will want to set a strategy in place for years to come. This means taking the time now, so in the year 2015, you are not an antiquated business trying to keep pace with an environmentally-advanced world. A marvelous example of planning for the future (or not) comes from a music trade magazine of the 1970s. The publishers did not embrace the new technology and preliminary electronic games and gadgets of the early 1980s. Competing publications, however, did start setting pages aside to grow with the advent of computers, video games, and such technology. The resistant magazine, very soon found that far more advertisers turned to their competition, and as a result, the magazine was left behind and ultimately had to close their doors.

While the motivation for saving the environment should not be to keep pace with your competitors, the frank truth of the matter is, that whether you wish to move forward or not, the environmental movement is not a passing fad, but the wave of the coming generation. It behooves the business owners of today to schedule a few extra meetings to address such issues.

Some businesses have regularly scheduled weekly meetings to address environmental concerns, while others have a specific committee or task force in place to study the feasibility of environmental projects and make recommendations and online reports. In some cases, if the budget allows, an energy consultant or staff ecologist

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may be hired who can then set up specific times for meetings at which he or she can lay out a plan. In all cases, time must be worked into the schedules of everyone involved, and it starts by a commitment from the top.

If business owners can sacrifice a round of golf or consolidate any of the host of weekly meetings to make time to address environmental issues, the ball will start rolling, and you can begin putting new systems in place for a greener business.



3 Start With an Energy Audit

One of the first steps toward becoming greener is to determine exactly how much energy you are using now and at what cost.

You can start with a simple energy audit. To begin, you will want to review your own energy expenditure and measure it on an ongoing basis by reading your energy bills and meters. Then, as your business grows and expands, you will be able to account for the additional energy consumption and measure the increase by additional units of production or by additional hours. This way you can see if you are maintaining a stable amount of energy use in conjunction with your growth. Of course, you will also want to compare your energy use with the needs of similar businesses. This will take some research, but will provide a benchmark, so you will know what a business of your size (and type) should be using in your geographic location.

For more precise results, you can have an audit conducted by an outside auditor. Audits may be done by local utilities, energy efficiency experts, or consultants, who can evaluate your energy use and punch up the numbers, so you can see where you can save money and as a result, help the environment. For a small business, such an audit is usually completed with one on-site.

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An energy audit should review many aspects of your business, including the construction of the facility and how much energy is escaping through structural deficits or through poor insulation. In addition, heating and cooling systems are taken into account to determine how effective they are and how much energy is being spent to maintain these systems. Water heating equipment can also be a major drain on energy, along with lighting, which is typically not well-managed in most businesses, particularly in offices. All machinery is reviewed, from computers to kitchen appliances, to determine if there are energy-saving features or possible Energy Star appliances that can be purchased as replacements. Finally, windows and doors are also taken into account, again, to see if they are contributing to wasted energy. Poorly insulated doors and windows can be a source of unwanted cool or warm air.

An energy audit will result in a report that lists your energy expenses and charts those numbers over time. The consultant, or energy analyst, should be able to provide you with comparable numbers for other businesses of your size in your geographic area, since varying climates will affect the need for energy use. Such a detailed analysis will allow you to compare yourself to nearby businesses in your industry, with many of the same energy needs.

Taking Action

The next step is to reconcile your theoretical energy consumption with that shown on your actual energy bills. After analyzing your specific needs and use of lighting, heating, air conditioning, machinery, and office equipment (including computers) to determine energy efficiency, you can seek lower-cost solutions, as well as change bad habits, and adopt new company-wide business policies to decrease your energy output.

The resulting suggestions can range from structural building repairs, to using LED light bulbs, minimizing paper use, and buying insulation blankets for water pipes. The bottom line is that an energy audit is a starting point from which to build a plan that can save both energy consumption and lower business costs. It can be

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your guiding “proclamation” from which you become greener and save a significant amount of money in the long term.

The problem is that not all local energy companies provide audit services and consultants can be difficult to find. Since audits are not uniformly available, Energy Star offers a software program to help you do your own assessment. Energy Star is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy, designed to help protect the environment through energy-efficient products and practices. In 2007, Energy Star-rated products and guidelines saved American home owners and businesses \$16 billion dollars on their utility bills, while making a significant impact on the global warming crisis. Top performing businesses are recognized annually and accredited by Energy Star.

The Energy Star Interactive Management Program, called Portfolio Manager, tells you where your entire business stands, energy-wise (or your entire building, if you own it) once you provide all of your utility billing data for the past 24 months on an Excel-type spreadsheet. Once you enter your gas, electricity, water usage, and other operating characteristics of your company, or building (based on your zip code), the program will tell you what your usage should amount to for a given year, calculating regional weather patterns into the equation. The program can compare your energy usage and subsequent payments from one year to the next. If you are part of a trade organization, you can also share the data with other affiliated members, if you so choose. Finally, the software program allows you to rate your energy performance on a scale of 1–100, relative to similar buildings nationwide. The password-protected file ensures privacy and is not linked to any database. For more on Portfolio Manager, you can go to **energystar.gov**. You can also call **1-888-STAR-YES** (1-888-782-7937) for more information during regular business hours.

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4 *Decrease Your Carbon Footprint*

A carbon footprint, or imprint, is a measure of carbon dioxide or CO₂ emitted into the atmosphere by humans and/or businesses conducting routine activities. At its most comprehensive, a carbon footprint measures the impact of products from their creation to their final disposal by the consumer.

Many businesses limit this cycle to monitoring the amount of carbon dioxide emitted through the combustion of fossil fuels, in (only) the daily operation of the business itself. This is not the entire picture, but it does, at least, capture some measure of the energy waste from the production process. The goal is for a company to be carbon neutral, meaning no (zero) emissions through activities, or paying offsetting fees for whatever is emitted.

Much like energy audits, a company's carbon imprint can be determined and measured by calculating specific information about emissions from factories, machinery, and vehicles used within the course of doing business. Energy use, miles driven, consumer behavior, and other factors are brought together and calculated to result in a measure known as a carbon footprint.

You can do this with any business. If, for example, you took a lemonade stand and calculated that it takes x amount of petroleum to grow the lemons, x amount of petroleum to bring the lemons in to the stand, x amount of petroleum to make the cups, x amount of petroleum to generate the lighting to work at night, and so on, you would be calculating the entire process or lifeline. "Generally, there is a lot more to include into the equation than most companies are using to calculate their footprint. Ultimately, the corporate footprint globally is $x+y=z$ and the goal is then to offset z," explains Joshua Onysko, president and founder of Pangea Organics, a Boulder Colorado-based maker of organic skincare and body care products and a company with a zero carbon footprint.

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Many companies can be used to offset a carbon footprint, such as purchasing wind credits or offset credits. "The reality is that at first a company should be looking at reducing, reusing and recycling. You always want to make the first attempt to lessen your own impact," adds Onysko.

Many of the means of making your business greener, as mentioned throughout this book, will lower the carbon footprint or imprint. As is typically the case, there are some energy needs that you cannot do without and those that you can only lower to a manageable level and still be a profitable business. The goal is to examine as many aspects of the product life cycle as possible, and see where you can make changes.

There are a few carbon calculators available online which can help you get started on this task. Take some time and punch in the numbers.

- ✿ EPA, at epa.gov
- ✿ The Nature conservancy at nature.org
- ✿ Carbonfund at carbonfund.org/site/pages/carbon_calculators



5 *Design Your Office in an Eco-Friendly Manner*

"Green design follows the same principles as other interior design except that everything you do, every step of the way, you are considering the earth and its resources," says Kelly LaPlante of Kelly LaPlante Organic Design located in Venice Beach, California.

For many businesses, going greener begins with the setting in which people spend numerous hours each day working. It is from here that your company-wide green mindset can begin with a new greener design.

It is a matter of thinking green with each step of the design process. For example, if you are painting, you are still going to

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choose the color that you want, but you will be looking for a low or no VOC paint (Volatile Organic Compound). Another example might be in furniture. If you are having a piece of furniture made, instead of using polyurethane foam for the core of the cushion, you can explore different options, such as organic latex. For businesses, this generally comes into play when moving to a new office or redecorating your current facilities. Of course one aspect of remodeling, moving, or redecorating, is finding other ways in which to reuse your old furnishings or recycle them. In some situations, employees get permission to take old desks or other discarded office furniture home for reuse in some practical or decorative manner.

LaPlante recommends first looking at what you can reuse. "One misconception that people have is that they have to throw away everything because it's not green and start completely from scratch. In reality, one of the greenest things you can do is reuse what you have in some manner because it takes no new resources," explains LaPlante, who is now in her tenth year of green design.

Another major factor in greening your office occurs when you upgrade your carpeting. There are a number of carpet companies that make carpets out of recycled polyester, saving a product from going to a landfill. This is not only recycled, but it is recyclable, so it can be recycled at the next remodeling. A company called InterFace (**interfacefloor.com**) has perfected carpet tiles, which are now very chic. "The beauty of carpet tiles, is that if something happens to the rug, which is not uncommon in a busy office, you can replace just that section. You can take it, recycle it, and replace it rather than having to replace a full room of carpeting," says LaPlante, who also recommends natural air from windows that actually open. Good ventilation helps ensure that the new carpet or new paint smell will not linger, giving employees headaches over the next several months or even years. Fresh air and airflow can do wonders for office employees from a health perspective. More people maintain good health and take fewer sick days, when the air quality is good. Indoor air quality is also of concern from a green and health standpoint, as is natural lighting.

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An increasing number of furnishings are made from wood certified by the FSC, the Forest Stewardship Counsel. The FSC is a third party company that makes sure no habitats are destroyed when logging wood for certified furniture, and that the employees responsible for its manufacture are receiving appropriate pay for their work. They certify wood products that are eco-friendly and from socially responsible sources. You can find FSC certified oak, mahogany, or other woods that have been sustainably managed in their production. Bamboo is also a very renewable resource, provided it has not been coated with a dye or that formaldehyde has not been used on it. If you are using bamboo, or any FSC wood, make sure it was not treated with chemicals after it was FSC-certified.

The best thing about recycled fabrics is that they were put back through the system and recycled, accordingly. "Many recycled fabrics are also very durable which is important for offices," adds LaPlante, who provides more information at kellylplante.com.

Check to see that all materials meet fire codes.

Finally, if you are looking for the latest in eco-friendly chairs, Herman Miller offers a new chair made of primarily recycled materials that is also ergonomic. Knoll also offers Greenguard-certified office furnishings. If you can't reuse what you already have, then these are some environmentally friendly products.

While looking for new eco-friendly office furnishings, you should also consider helping limit gas use and emissions by looking at local manufacturers and distributors. Less shipping is a plus, especially if your new furniture comes directly from the manufacturer and does not need to be routed through a warehouse.

There are many factors that go into greener furnishings. These are just a sample of the many items to consider when designing, or re-designing, a greener office.

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6 *Become an Eco-Friendly Shopper*

Business owners, including those selling retail or wholesale products and/or services, can become greener shoppers, themselves. Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) as it's called, means buying products with a reduced negative effect on the environment rather than competing products serving the same purpose. This doesn't mean you should go out of your way to find what you need, but that you can simply order products more selectively. For example, most of the paper needs for your business can be recycled. This holds true with most office products, so you'll need to make identifying recycled products part of your shopping routine, much the way that dieters look at calories and anyone with high cholesterol should be looking at the trans fat content.

There are two types of recycled products you will find. Post-consumer recycled products, which are those that have been used by consumers and then recycled, and post-manufacturer recycled, which is waste created by a manufacturing process that is subsequently used as a constituent in another manufacturing process. While post-consumer waste is preferable, both are means of recycling.

Look closely at office supplies, cleaning products, equipment, and everything else you typically need to buy for your business and see if there is a greener version. To make your search easier, you can look for products that meet Green Seal standards and have their certificates. Visit greenseal.org for more information.

Other shopping considerations may include:

- ♻ Patronize companies that feature green business practices.
- ♻ Shop locally to minimize long distance shipping.
- ♻ Look for products that are more durable and will last longer.
- ♻ Select products that do not drain energy or waste water, such as Energy Star appliances (as discussed throughout this book).

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- ♻️ Attempt to reuse what you have before buying something new.
- ♻️ Buy products from suppliers who do not use excessive or non-biodegradable packaging. If you don't know what type of materials a company uses for shipping, ask. Say no to Styro-foam peanuts and bubble wrap. You can also stop ordering from suppliers that send products with excess paper, such as shipments with cardboard dividers between the bottles, or excessive plastic or shrink-wrap.
- ♻️ Reuse shipping materials. Just as kids love to turn the boxes their toys come in into new houses and places to hide, you can also reuse boxes.

When you are shopping in a brick and mortar store, take along your own cloth bags rather than use the paper or plastic bags provided by the store.

In a land of excess, we also need to refocus our shopping mentality to eliminate overbuying. It will save you money and allow you to more easily make a profit rather than load up your stockroom or storeroom. Businesses routinely buy at least 30 percent more supplies and equipment than they actually need, and this does not include excess inventory. Determine where you can cut corners and, if you do overbuy, let someone else use or buy your excess rather than waste it.

Becoming a green shopper for your business, or training your office manager, plant manager, or chief purchasing agent to think sustainable and eco-friendly, just takes time and practice. As you'll see in many of the suggestions throughout the book, it all starts with the right mindset.

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7 *Start an Office Recycling Program*

Whether your business employs three people or three hundred, an office committed to recycling is a very basic green step you can take to enhance your commitment to the environment.

Of course, if you develop waste reduction policies first, you can limit your recyclables from the start. For example, if reusable mugs are used for coffee, you'll have fewer disposable coffee cups to recycle. Nonetheless, recycling is part and parcel to green office etiquette today, or at least it should be. To begin with, you'll want to have one or more people oversee such a program, depending on how large your staff is. The first step is identifying what is recyclable, such as newspapers, office paper, glass and plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and cardboard boxes. Make a list. If you run an auto repair business, or have a fleet of vehicles (or even a few), old tires can be recycled and ultimately reused as doormats and playground safety covering.

The next step is to find a local recycling pickup service. Via the internet or phonebook you will find companies listed under waste disposal and/or recycling.

For computer cartridges and technical equipment, you will usually find separate recycling services. Recycling vendors have different rates and specific rules and regulations they follow, some in conjunction with local ordinances. There may be certain days on which they make pickups in your area and specific places from which they can pick up. You can ask them how they expect recyclable material to be collected. For example, old newspaper usually needs to be bundled and cardboard boxes should be broken down.

You can also contact local recycling centers, many of which can be found at recyclingcenters.org. Centers in every state are listed on the site.

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Next, you'll need to find a place within your office in which to collect these items. This can range from one central location in a smaller office to desk-side recycling in large companies. Depending on the size of your facility, you can determine how many bins you may need and situate them accordingly. Typically, most offices have bins for paper, plastic, bottles, and cans.

You will need someone to collect and put the recyclables out for pickup, or take them to a recycling center, typically once per week. Such collection can be on a rotating schedule in an office with 20 or more people, so that different volunteers are responsible and no one person has the same task each week.

Finally, spreading the word among employees is important to make sure everyone gets with the program. As a business owner or manager, you can set the tone (by example). If your staff sees you are determined to go green, they will follow, if for no other reason than because they want to stay on your good side. You can also provide incentives for your employees, collectively, for recycling and meeting specific goals and/or individually, for those who have volunteered to spearhead the effort. For more recycling information, you might check out Earth 911 at earth911.org/recycling.

FAST FACT

Making a can out of recycled aluminum takes only 5 percent of the energy needed to make an aluminum can from raw materials.



8 Know Your Plastics (and Sort by Number)

At present, not all plastics are easily recyclable, no matter what the label says. There isn't much of a market for the lower grades of plastic, making them more difficult to recycle. To make life simpler for those of us concerned about recycling, you can check the grade number of the plastic, usually found within the three arrow label

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indicating that the product is recyclable. The higher grades, which are the lower numbers, such as 1 and 2, are the more commonly recyclable plastics. This isn't to say that other grades of plastic will not be recycled. However, there are more recycling centers available for Grade 1, Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) and Grade 2, High-Density Polyethylene (HDP) plastics. Soda bottles are typically made from Grade 1 and bottles for milk and water from Grade 2. Grade 3 is Polyvinyl chloride (which can be toxic in production and disposal); Grade 4, Low Density Polyethylene; Grade 5, Polypropylene; Grade 6, Polystrene; and Grade 7, a composite of any plastics that do not fall into the above categories.

Sorting plastics can be beneficial and also separating lids to be collected separately is recommended, since often the lids are not made from the same grade of plastic as the container. Many recycling companies do not want the lids because they cannot be recycled with the other plastic. It is also advantageous to separate Grades 1 and 2 bottles from other containers, since it is easier for most recycling companies to handle bottles, but not all can handle containers. In fact, some containers, even of high-grade plastic, may not be accepted and may be best used to store goods at home or carry lunches to and from work.

Right now, many recycling centers do not accept grades above 2, largely because there is not enough demand for such plastics, since they may have had additives contaminating them, or they may simply not be durable enough for adequate reuse.



FAST FACT

Apparently, we are a culture hooked on plastic bottles. Did you know that in any one given hour, Americans go through 2.5 million plastic bottles?

FYI: Grade 4 plastics can be made into shampoo bottles and/or shopping bags. Grade 5 plastics are often made into fibers that can be recycled into garments, although there is limited equipment available to do this. Grade 6 plastics include Styrofoam, which, thus far has been difficult to recycle.

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Since there are potential uses for these grades of plastic, as technology advances, we will hopefully see more recycling centers accepting them. For now, look for Grades 1 and 2 plastics, then sort and recycle. To read more on plastics, and find a nationwide list of recycling centers, go to plasticresources.com.

