

## Office Supplies

### **39. Green Office Supplies**

Almost anything used in an office can be somewhat green. From promotional material to the paper used in the printers, there's no limit! Below you will find supplies that can be easily switched out in favour of greener choices. Choose a source for office supplies located as closely as possible to your organization. Look for products manufactured in your country or continent that will require less transportation.

### **40. Adhesive Notes**

Before having all these notes spread over your desk and computer, ask yourself if you really need this type of supply. Do you really need the combination of adhesive and paper, or can paper alone do the job? If you do buy adhesive notes, buy ones made out of recycled paper and that contain post-consumer content. Sometimes post-consumer content isn't always indicated on the label, but ask for it. The more consumers ask, the more corporations will adjust their materials strategies.

### **41. Binders**

First, always use your binders more than once. If you no longer need the contents of a binder but feel you need to keep it, store it in a cabinet or in properly labelled storage boxes. Every year, check to see which ones are still good and which ones need a

little repair, then try to find binders made with recycled materials.

#### **42. Pens**

Instead of buying cheap pens and throwing them away when there's no ink left, use a long-life refillable pen made out of recycled plastic, paper, or timber. Why not rely more on electronic means to write down notes? It's now a common practice to bring a computer to a meeting to take down notes. You'll save paper, ink, and time since you don't need to re-type the contents to send minutes or actions via e-mail. If you're more the pencil type, buy pencils made with wood off-cuts or recycled paper.

#### **43. Paper Clips**

Reuse, reuse, reuse. If you look inside office drawers in North America, you're sure to find paper clips. Everyone has them. Set aside a reclamation area where people can leave their unneeded clips and others can take them as needed.

#### **44. Scissors**

If you need new scissors, it's either because your old pair is no longer working efficiently, or because you don't have any. If you don't have a pair, only buy scissors made with recycled stainless steel blades and plastic handles containing post-consumer plastic. Some pairs contain as much as 70% recycled materials.

If your old scissors don't work properly anymore, see if you can have them repaired. Maybe the blades just aren't sharp anymore. If so, have them sharpened. If there's a problem with the screw in the middle, go to your local knife store—there's a good chance your scissors can be able to be repaired.

#### **45. Tape Dispensers**

Try to buy tape dispensers made of at least 50% post-consumer plastic, and make sure if yours is broken or damaged to put it in the recycling bin. Not all recyclers take them, but the more you put them in the bin, the more recyclers will see there is volume and will start taking them.

#### **46. Waste Baskets.**

Choose waste baskets made from recycled steel, which takes less energy to produce than products made from iron ore, for example. Baskets made out of recycled plastics are also a good option.

#### **47. Avoid Markers with Solvent Based Ink**

If possible, replace solvent-based markers with chalk, wax pens, or simple color pencils. There are plenty of options when you spend some time thinking about it.

## Consumption

### **48. Use Fewer Napkins**

In cafeterias and public eating places where napkins are offered for free, people have a tendency to take more napkins than necessary because they're afraid of needing to get back up to get a few more. Try to educate them about all that waste. Maybe you can make the napkins a little less available by placing them under the counter, for example. Or maybe people will need to ask for them. This will make people be more reasonable when taking napkins. If your organization is small, why not provide hand towels that you have washed by a cleaning service every day?

### **49. Consume Less**

You've heard the proverb that more is better. This goes against the ecological footprint reduction concept. Today, we as individuals and organizations consume far more food, equipment, and gadgets than we actually need. Before making a purchase for the workplace, ask yourself if this product is really needed now, at this moment, or can wait. If the answer to is that it can wait and you're able to postpone that purchase, chances are you won't buy it in the end. Your organization's immediate apparent need will have passed or moved on to something else, and you'll avoid making unnecessary purchases which is better for your organization's cash flow and better for the environment.

## **50. Consume Right**

It's often said in our capitalist world that the only good thing a consumer can do is buy, buy, and buy again. Today, with environmental concerns in mind, consumers and corporate citizens need to buy products or services that will be produced or delivered in a manner respectful of the environment and the people associated with it.

## **51. "Just in Case" purchases**

Ever bought something "just in case", only to realize that you now have three of the same product, or that the co-worker seated next to you has one that he can share? If you're unsure, postpone your purchase. If it turns out you really need it, you're probably sure, not uncertain.

## **52. Buy Organic**

Buying organic food for your organization not only ensures that you, your employees, or customers are eating food that's produced without pesticides and so on, but it's also a statement about sustaining durable development. Respect the soil, the air, and the people involved with these products. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's national organic program includes a set of standards verified by an independent party. Organic food is now available in most supermarkets and is used in restaurants and cafeterias.

### **53. Batteries**

The number of batteries your employees go through in the course of the year can be astonishing. Start a recycling program at work. Your recycling program can be very simple. Here's a trick: Use an old ice cream or yogurt container and designate an area to place it in, like the lobby or cafeteria, for example. It's much easier for your employees to bring used batteries to work since they come in every day, than to have them accumulate at home. Once your receptacle is full, have a volunteer take the used batteries to your local recycling depot. You'll probably find that you need a bigger container as you'll see it fills up pretty quickly when even a few people begin contributing.

Choose rechargeable batteries for regularly used devices. Not only does this save you money, but batteries need to be disposed of properly when they're no longer chargeable. This impact can be great in an organization. Think of an organization with many flashlights or electric gadgets, for example, then consider how many batteries they would save on a yearly basis.

### **54. Toilet Paper and Tissues**

When buying toilet paper or tissues, buy the kind made from 100% recycled materials. By doing this, you eliminate the need to cut more trees and help the recycling streams. More and more of these products are now made without any whitening agents like chlorine, which is a good thing.

## **55. Calendars**

Can you imagine how much paper is needed to put all those wall calendars in offices and organizations around the world? Can you now imagine the impact it would have if only half of these organizations bought erasable wall calendars instead? Making this change requires a single investment and is probably one of the easiest tips to apply in this book.

## **Electricity**

### **56. Sell Your Own Electricity**

If a small river flows on your property or you have significant winds blowing in your area, you can invest in renewable energy sources and sell your surplus electricity to a local provider. This not only saves money but can make your organization money, too. If your energy source is intermittent, this method can offset the costs of using network energy when your own system is not enough.

### **57. Use Alternative Sources of Energy Without Investing**

More and more, electricity companies are starting to offer consumers a choice between a main source (which is often coal, unfortunately) and an alternative source like wind, hydro or solar power. In some regions you can choose that the electricity company buy the equivalent of your consumption from a renewable source with the click of a mouse. This will also entitle