

7 Benefits of a Green Office—And How to Make the Switch

by Victoria Tenny

You've heard about more and more businesses going green and focusing on sustainability. But is it really worth it? Read on to learn about the benefits of working in a green office.

1. More Productive Employees

This one is huge. Happy employees who are relaxed in their environment are less distracted by physical discomforts and give their job tasks more attention. It's that simple!

2. Decreased Carbon Footprint

Through the installation of energy-efficient fixtures and a switch to laptops instead of desktops, businesses use less energy. While this involves some up-front costs, it's paid back in many ways including employee productivity and the preservation of the planet.

3. Emphasis on Recycling

When employers convey the importance of going green, everybody wins. With more convenient ways to recycle and an effort to reduce the creation of unnecessary garbage, there's less to go to the landfill and more that can be made back into something new.

4. Improved Image of Company

By focusing on sustainability and employee wellness, companies can improve their corporate image. They demonstrate a willingness to be concerned with more than just a product or sales, but also with something more—human beings and the earth we all share.

5. Increased Health and Well Being

Healthy employees don't need to call in sick. While going green won't prevent the common cold, decreased headaches, stress, and the like are significantly less of an issue. Plus, it's just plain nice to enjoy the space you work in every day!

6. Better Air Quality

Being mindful of toxins introduced to the office and ensuring fresh, outside air is filtered in makes for a cleaner environment. Employees feel more energized and able to complete projects to the best of their ability.

7. Less Noise

Road noise and construction are common distractions, as are noisy copy machines and other office equipment. With an improved focus on minimizing these interruptions, communication and productivity improves.

Make the Switch for Your Office

How can you make your home or business office more sustainable? Here are some ideas.

1. Make Recycling Easy and Convenient

Make sure that employees know what can be recycled and make receptacles easily available. If you have a home office, see if your waste disposal company offers recycling totes so you have more room to recycle everything that you can.

2. Add Some Plants

This is an easy fix—low-light thrivers such as the snake plant, cast iron plant, heartleaf philodendron, and bamboo are easy to add throughout the office and straight-forward to take care of. In addition to providing a calm, visual reminder of nature, they also help to filter toxins from the air. You could also install a water feature for a relaxing, natural addition.

3. Consider Laptops

Laptops use less energy than desktops, especially when you seek out the most energy-efficient options and settings. Plus, giving employees the option to telecommute reduces fuel consumption, improves work satisfaction, and allows for exposure to fresh air and natural light. And on that note...

4. Allow for Natural Light

Whenever possible, allow natural light into your office for a productivity boost. At the very least, find energy-efficient light fixtures with better artificial light sources that aren't so harsh. Set up your office so employees can see an outside window from their workstation if at all possible.

5. Decrease Chemicals

Be mindful of strong chemical cleaners and the potential off-gassing of furniture or equipment. Instead, choose natural cleaners and be aware of the materials your office supplies, furnishings, and flooring are made with.

6. Let in Some Fresh Air

In nice weather, open windows if at all possible. Home offices especially can meet this goal. Also, make sure ventilation sources filter in outdoor air to minimize chemicals and odors in the building.

7. Think Thermal

Determine the ideal temperature and humidity for the comfort of employees. It's nearly impossible to be productive when you're shivering under a parka! Consider other comfort factors, too, such as distracting noises or less-than-pleasant odors.

You Can Make a Difference

Implement some or all of these ideas to see an increase in health, happiness, and productivity in your office. Every change for the better leads to improved productivity, more employee satisfaction, and a healthier planet.