

How to Start an Office Recycling Program (And Why You Should)



Sustainability and green initiatives are becoming widespread in modern business culture. One of the easiest ways for your company to help the environment is to start an office recycling program. Much of the common waste in your office (paper, cans, etc.) is recyclable. Starting a recycling program not only helps the environment, but can also save you money on waste disposal expenses.

Read on to find out more about the recycling process, why it is needed, and tips for starting your own-at work recycling program.

The Cost Of Human Waste By The Numbers

In the United States alone we produced [251 million tons of trash](#) in the year 2006 according to the EPA. To break it down, that's roughly 4.6 pounds of trash for every person in the nation produced every day. Approximately 35% of total trash is produced by businesses and schools with the other 65% coming from private citizens. Sadly, only 33% of all trash gets recycled, 12.5% gets incinerated, while the other 58% takes up space in landfills. This can lead to groundwater pollution and an increase in greenhouse gases due to methane releases. However, embracing recycling can help.

Quick Facts About Recyclable Materials

- **Aluminum:** Aluminum can be recycled an [endless number of times](#). An aluminum can you throw away can be recycled into a new can and back in use in as little as two months!
- **Paper:** If we recycled every newspaper in America, we would save an astonishing 250,000,000 trees every year!
- **Plastic:** When you recycle plastic it saves double the energy required to incinerate it.
- **Glass:** Recycling one glass bottle saves enough energy to light a compact fluorescent light bulb for 20 hours.

We can do better. About [75% of what we throw away can be recycled](#), but sadly only 30% is actually recycled. You can help by starting a recycling program at your place of employment.

How To Start An Office Recycling Program

Step 1: Planning

Starting a recycling program for your office isn't as hard as you may think. The key is to plan it in phases. First you need to take stock of what you're throwing out every day and then figure out what part of this is recyclable. The second step is to not overdo it. Start slow with an easy to recycle product such as paper or soda cans. Once you get your co-workers into the habit of recycling, then you can expand the program to include other materials.

In time, you can build up your recycling program to include even bigger products such as out-of-date electronics like computers and printers.

Step 2: Getting Employees On Board

The key of any successful project is making it so others are encouraged to participate. Make it known company wide that there is a new recycling program that has been started and then [make it easy to get involved](#). You do this by strategically placing recycling bins where co-workers will easily notice them and also be inclined to use them. Areas such as break rooms or lunch rooms are ideal. Then make sure everything is clearly labeled.

To help encourage participation, consider a company-wide update about recycling facts and figures to show how much good their recycling efforts are doing. They'll not only feel a sense of pride, but also be inclined to continue.

Step 3: Education Of Others

Your leaders and co-workers are not the only people who need to be made aware of the program. Make sure your building's janitors and property managers know what's going on as well. This assures that your recyclable goods are handled properly and aren't just thrown out with the regular trash.

Step 4: Pick Up

Once you've started a recycling program, the last step in the process is deciding who should handle the separated and bagged recyclables. There are a lot of different ways to handle this and what you end up using will depend on your company's size and resources.

Many local municipalities have recycling programs in place that will handle pick-up for you. In other situations you may consider hiring an outside service, involve a local charity or volunteers, or simply drop it off at the appropriate location yourself.

Other Tips To Make Your Office Environmentally Friendly

There are other ways to cut down on waste at the office. For example, [don't over purchase](#). Buy only office materials you need so supplies don't sit in storage going unused only to be thrown out when they are no longer useful. When buying supplies, buy from vendors that are environmentally conscious. This means you'll look for vendors that use minimal packaging for storage and shipment. Also use vendors who use recycled goods as part of their daily business or products. Reuse products (such as shipping boxes) when you can. Finally buy products made from recycled goods or materials.

Start Your Office Recycling Program Today!

With a little bit of effort, you can make your workplace more efficient and environmentally friendly. Plan for success by equipping your workplace with [recycling bins and containers](#) that make it quick and easy for your team to participate. Modern recycling bins and containers are sleek, stylish, and clearly marked. Find the perfect containers for your office today and do your part to help the environment!

