

Business Sustainability Checklist

Is it easy being green? It can be, if you know the steps to take to get there.

The Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce has worked with our members to create a list of 78 activities for businesses to pursue to be green. We acknowledge it does not include everything, but it is a great start.

Waste Prevention

- Reduce Copying: use electronic distribution to avoid unnecessary document printing, and set copier and printer defaults to two-sided
- Regularly update/purge your mailing list
- Contact catalogue senders and others to reduce the amount of bulk mail and duplicate mailings you receive
- Use marketing materials that require no envelope
- Reuse packaging and shipping materials
- Offer reusable shopping bags and/or discounts for those who use them
- Replace individual hand soap containers with larger refillable dispensers
- Use reusable rather than disposable products- dishes, towels, boxes, bags, containers
- Install motion towel dispensers or air dryers near all sinks
- Install motion activated soap dispensers
- Prohibit littering at the workplace or while on duty, including the improper disposal of cigarette butts

Recycling

- Recycle paper
- Recycle glass

Some activities are harder than others. Some cost more than others. And some are really cheap and simple!

Review the list and consider what your company is doing and could do to conserve resources and save money. We are optimistic that you will surprise yourself with your success and the new opportunities for sustainability.

- Recycle aluminum and other metals
- Recycle plastic bottles, utensils, wrappers and other materials
- Recycle boxes and other cardboard materials
- Recycle pallets, pallet wrap, and any other wood debris
- Recycle toner and inkjet cartridges
- Recycle or properly dispose of all used batteries
- Recycle used cooking oil
- Install signs and distribute instructions on recycling to staff
- Compost food and landscape waste

Purchasing

- Buy office copy paper with at least 30% recycled content
- Print letterhead and business cards on 100% recycled stock
- Purchase and use safer, more eco-friendly alternative(s) to previously used products for janitorial, pest control, and/or facility maintenance
- Purchase recycled/re-manufactured toner cartridges
- Purchase biodegradable or compostable "to go" food containers
- Purchase more materials in bulk
- Use low-emission building materials when remodeling

- Purchase used furniture, equipment, or materials
- Exchange or donate unwanted furniture, equipment, scrap materials, etc.
- Purchase from other “green” vendors or service providers
- Purchase more materials and supplies locally to reduce transportation emissions

Energy and Water Conservation

- Have a professional perform an on-site audit of your energy use
- Track energy usage and share data with employees
- Replaces incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents
- Replace old T12 fluorescents with energy efficient lighting
- Use motion sensors, timers, or other lighting controls in appropriate rooms
- Unplug chargers when not in use
- Use “Energy Star” equipment
- Update insulation or windows (include tinting)
- Use programmable thermostat
- Get an HVAC tune-up or refrigeration tune-up
- Set all computer monitors to turn off after 10 minutes of inactivity
- Turn all computers off at the end of each business day
- Use renewable energy (e.g. solar)
- Use aerators and/or auto shut-off faucets
- Install commercial ultra low-flow toilets
- Install waterless urinals
- Install pre-rinse spray nozzle in kitchen
- Regularly check for and repair leaks in the restroom
- Install low-water or no-water landscaping

- Clean outdoor areas with a broom instead of a water hose or air blower
- Use recovered wastewater and/or rainwater

Involving Stakeholders

- Involve employees in developing your green business plan; get their input
- Establish a “Green Committee” of employees to make the green business plan and to regularly identify new strategies
- Provide training for employees on implementing green business practices
- Institute a green business policy in the employee handbook, making participation in the practices a condition of employment
- Inform suppliers and/or customers about your green business interests and efforts; solicit their suggestions
- Encourage “green” practices by your customers
- Achieve sustainability recognition, award or certification for your business
- Achieve sustainability recognition, award or certification for your employees
- Participate in a local clean-up event
- Attend training/information sessions on green practices

Transportation

- Implement policies/practices to encourage employee walking, biking, carpooling, transit, and/pr telecommuting
- Provide an incentive or reimburse employee travel on public transportation
- Provide an incentive for employees that use alternative transportation

- Use teleconferences or web conferences rather than traveling for face-to-face meetings
- Schedule regular tune-ups for business vehicles; check tire pressure regularly; check for “ground staining” regularly
- Recycle all vehicle fluids, oils, etc
- Use hybrid or alternative fuel vehicle(s)

Operations

- Offer a green or sustainable product service
- Replace production equipment with energy or water efficient models
- Install trees, bushes and other landscaping at local facility
- Use recycled or previously used material in manufactured products
- Reduce and recycle waste materials from manufacturing process
- Adjust work schedules for efficient utility use and reduced traffic from employees and shipping vehicles
- Implement a protocol for employee suggestions for efficiency