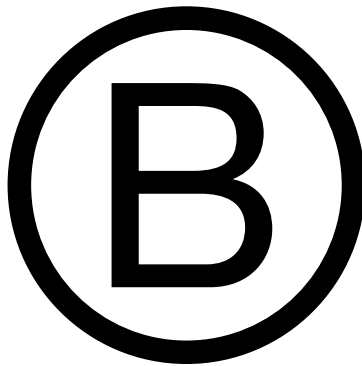


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B Resource Guide:

How to Implement an Office Material Recycling Program



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What's in this Guide:

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I. 10 Steps to Creating a Formal Recycling Program

As part of your efforts to reduce material usage at the office, you may wish to implement a more formal recycling program. This 10 step guide provides good detail on doing so, as well as implementing a more general culture of 'reduce, re-use, recycle.'¹

1) Gain Management Support: Management support is critical to the success of your program. Gain support by demonstrating how a waste reduction and recycling program can save the company money, boost employee morale and save natural resources. Programs succeed best when management:

- i) Implements company-wide waste reduction and recycling policies.
- ii) Allocates resources (personnel and money).
- iii) Leads by example — reducing waste, recycling and buying recycled.
- iv) Stays committed and involved
- v) Supports incentives to reward staff involvement.

2) Choose a Coordinator: Select one person to coordinate the program. Choose someone enthusiastic and organized who communicates well with co-workers and management. The coordinator will:

- i) Work with others to evaluate which materials can be reduced and recycled.
- ii) Teach co-workers and management how to reduce, reuse and recycle waste.
- iii) Coordinate activities with service providers and other company departments.
- iv) Keep everyone in the company informed about the program goals and successes.
- b) If your business has several departments, you may want to create a waste reduction and recycling team to work with the coordinator. The team should include someone from each department — management, maintenance, production, purchasing, personnel and food service.

3) Perform a Waste Assessment: Knowing where to begin with an assessment depends on the type and amount of waste your company generates. A waste assessment should address:

- i) How much waste your business generates.
- ii) Where, how and why waste is generated.
- iii) What types of materials you are throwing away.
- iv) Where your waste is going and how it is managed.
- v) How much your collection and disposal services cost.



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vi) How much of your waste can be reduced and/or recycled. Through this assessment, employees will become aware of what waste is created and how it is managed. Now staff can target opportunities for reduction and recycling. Knowing where to begin with an assessment depends on the type and amount of waste your company generates. Then, for each waste material identified, consider the best management option:

vii) Reduce.

viii) Reuse or donate.

ix) Recycle.

x) Purchase an alternative made from recycled materials.

xi) Continue to dispose of the material properly until there is a better option.

4) Design Your Recycling Program: Next, determine the best method for getting recyclables to market. Then decide how to efficiently collect and store these materials at your location. There are two options for getting recyclables to a market: selfhauling or using a service provider.

a) Self-Hauling: For businesses that have amounts too small for a service provider to pick-up, consider self-hauling recyclables to a collection center. Weigh the following factors:

i) Where can the recyclables be taken?

ii) What are the market specifications for the recyclables?

iii) What potential revenues can offset the cost of collection and transportation?

iv) Are the markets reliable?

v) Do you have adequate labor and equipment to collect and transport the recyclables?

b) Choosing a Recycling Service Provider: Most businesses prefer the convenience of having recyclables picked up. Many waste haulers provide this service in addition to their basic trash collection — check with yours. Comparison shopping will help you find the most complete, reliable and cost-effective option.

Questions to Ask Potential Recycling Service Providers:

i) Have you worked with my type of business before?

ii) Do you have references?

iii) What materials do you collect?

iv) How should recyclables be sorted?

v) Is there a minimum amount required for collection?

vi) Do you provide collection containers (desk paper trays, bins, barrels, dumpsters, outside storage containers, etc.)?

vii) How is the pick-up service scheduled (weekly, on-call, etc.)?

viii) Do you provide educational materials and recycling training?

ix) What are your payment terms?

x) Do you require a contract for service?



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c) Designing a Collection and Storage System: Every recycling program must include a convenient, efficient and clean material collection and storage system.

d) Consider the following factors when designing your system:

- i) Keep the system simple and convenient for customers and employees.
- ii) Determine when recyclable materials will be collected.
- iii) Decide who will handle the recyclables at each step of the way.
- iv) Select the type and size of recycling collection containers needed.
- v) Place the collection containers in a convenient and safe location.
- vi) Label all containers clearly.
- vii) Choose a location for storing collected recyclables.
- viii) Identify local zoning and/or fire code requirements relevant to the type, location and possible screening of storage containers.
- ix) Address workplace safety issues such as heavy lifting, hauling and ergonomics.
- x) Training is vital so that everyone who handles recyclables — custodial staff and outside contractors alike — understands how the program works. Plan for staff turnover. Include components of the recycling program when training new custodial staff or hiring a new service.

e) Design with flexibility in mind. Be ready to change your initial practices as you gather information and learn new handling methods. If your business generates large quantities of materials, consider establishing a pilot program to work out potential problems before expanding the program company-wide.

5) Purchase Environmentally Preferred Products: Purchasing decisions can greatly support your waste reduction and recycling efforts. Choose environmentally preferred products and services — those that have reduced impact on the environment and human health.

- a) Ensure that your purchases support your waste reduction and recycling efforts
- b) Make a company-wide commitment to purchase environmentally preferred products and services.
- c) Identify purchasing opportunities.
- d) Revise purchasing policies, ordering practices and product specifications.
- e) Set realistic, attainable purchasing goals.
- f) With every purchase, ask: “What alternative product that meets our needs is a better choice for the environment?”
- g) Questions to Consider Before Purchasing Any Product:
 - i) Is the product non-hazardous or less hazardous than other choices?
 - ii) Is the product reusable, durable or easily repaired?
 - iii) Is the product made from recycled materials or renewable resources (such as plant-based raw materials)?
 - iv) Will a recycled-content product work in place of one made with virgin materials?
 - v) Does the product conserve energy or water?



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- vi) Is the product refillable or available in bulk quantity to reduce packaging?
- vii) Is product leasing an option?
- viii) What happens to the product at the end of its life?
- ix) Can it be recycled?
- x) Does it need special disposal?
- xi) Will the manufacturer take it back?
- h) Buy Recycled: Recycling is more than collecting, processing, and turning materials into new products. Success only comes when we buy those recycled-content products, thereby closing the recycling loop.
- i) Throughout your business, look for opportunities to substitute recycled-content products for those made from virgin materials — in most cases, their quality is comparable or superior. Look for recycled-content in everything from office products and packaging to building materials and raw materials for manufacturing.
- j) Examples of Environmentally Preferred Purchasing
 - i) Equipment
 - (1) Develop maintenance contracts and purchasing specifications for laser printers and copy machines that support the use of recycled-content paper and remanufactured toner cartridges.
 - (2) Purchase used equipment.
 - (3) Purchase or lease copiers and laser printers that automatically copy or print on both sides (duplex printing).
 - ii) Supplies
 - (1) Specify chlorine free recycled-content paper and soy- or agri-based ink when placing printing orders.
 - (2) Purchase laser, copy and letterhead paper with 30 - 100% post-consumer recycled paper content.
 - (3) Contract with a janitorial service that uses less-hazardous (less toxic) or non-hazardous cleaners.
 - (4) Shop at reuse centers.
 - iii) Products
 - (1) Tell your vendor to use waste reduction techniques, such as minimal packaging or returnable shipping containers and pallets.
 - (2) Manufacture products and packaging that can be reused or recycled.
 - (3) Evaluate all purchases — think about “cradle to grave” costs such as liability, environmental impacts and employee safety during the manufacture, use and disposal of a product.

6) Kick Off Your Program: Employee participation is critical to success. Gain the support and active participation of upper management immediately. Employees who see their boss reducing, reusing and recycling are more likely to participate. Make participation easy: educate everyone about the program. One good way is to post instructional signs throughout the company.

- a) Announce and Promote the Program: Make an announcement at your next staff meeting, post a message



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on company bulletin boards or send an e-mail announcing the start of the new or improved program. Follow these steps:

- b) Announce the commitment to reduce waste, recycle and purchase environmentally preferred products.
- c) Spell out the new program procedures clearly.
- d) Introduce the program coordinator and provide his or her phone number and/or email address.
- e) Encourage employees to share innovative ideas and solutions.
- f) Launch your program with a special event or staff party. Then promote the program both internally and throughout your community. Signs and posters as well as newsletters and community newspapers can get your message out.
- g) Hold Training Sessions: Staff meetings are ideally suited for training sessions. Both the coordinator and management should be involved answering questions, providing encouragement and discussing the program's needs and successes. Provide employees with a list of materials currently accepted (or specifically rejected) by the recycling program, along with brief instructions on topics such as collection locations and material handling methods.

7) Track Program Successes: Once underway, track successes and show management how the company is saving money. Monitor and evaluate the program to ensure its viability and success. Track any revenue as well as avoided costs, such as:

- a) Recycling revenues.
- b) Lower garbage bills.
- c) Reduced purchasing or operating costs.
- d) Avoided regulatory and compliance expenses.

8) Keep Employees Informed and Involved: Provide regular program updates. For long-term success, positive communication and employee recognition are critical. Show people how their participation produces results. Here are some suggestions for keeping staff and management informed and involved:

- a) Write an article about the program's successes and staff involvement for the company newsletter.
- b) Send e-mail updates on a regular basis.
- c) Post flyers reminding employees of program goals.
- d) Encourage each department to designate a "team leader" to monitor efforts.
- e) Train new employees during the orientation process.
- f) Give awards to employees or departments who have demonstrated innovative strategies for waste reduction and recycling.

9) Get Recognition For Your Efforts: Be proud of your program. By making the commitment to reduce, reuse, recycle and buy environmentally preferred products, you are helping to improve the environment and your community — an achievement customers and residents alike will appreciate. Publicizing your efforts will set an example for others to follow:

- a) Send news releases about your program's accomplishments to community papers as well as



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environmental and business trade publications.

- b) Post signs and banners in public areas that inform visitors about your program. Include the statement "Printed on Recycled Paper" on your company's recycled content letterhead.
- c) Motivate other businesses to establish their own programs. Speak at business meetings, workshops and seminars.
- d) Sponsor a local clean-up day or take part in community recycling activities & events. Let the community know your business cares.
- e) Train new employees during the orientation process.

10) Share With Your County How You Are Doing: Many resources are available to help make your waste reduction and recycling program successful. Your county environmental office wants to know about your company's success. It is available to provide assistance or refer you to an agency that may provide:

- a) Individual business consultations and on-site assistance.
- b) Grants and loans.
- c) Materials exchange service.
- d) Business guides and fact sheets.
- e) Seminars and training.
- f) Recycling market information.
- g) Information on recycling service providers.

II. Recycling Program Examples:

• Great Printers Initiative:

<http://www.pimn.org/environment/greatprinter.htm>

• Harvard Medical School:

<http://www.greencampus.harvard.edu/lgci/documents/HMSRecyclingGuidelinesFinal.pdf>

• Apple Computer: <http://www.apple.com/environment/recycling/>

¹ http://www.greenguardian.com/business/rwmg_steps.asp