Reducing Our Carbon Footprint

Strategy Management/F2 Administration
Finance & Facilities

What was the driver for this initiative?

Strategy Management has actively been involved in green projects for several years as a result of individual grassroots efforts from various staff members. With the establishment of the Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability office within Strategy Management many of our green projects have acquired a greater momentum, particularly composting and paper reduction initiatives. The main driver for our paper consumption reduction was a combination of personal behavior change, state legislation (SHB 2287), changes to office procedures, and providing tools to reduce the need for paper like LCD projectors and shared workspaces on the web and the Wiki.

What did you do to achieve your goals?

Our office did not set firm goals for how to reduce consumption of paper or how much reduction we wanted to achieve. We did have several conversations at our staff meetings to raise awareness and gradually the office has become increasingly interested in the benefits of printing less, both environmentally and economically. Most staff members have reduced their consumption simply by being aware of their own usage, and by finding easy ways to work around printing. For example, we collected the printer usage per staff member and identified which individuals in the office were printing the least per month. This encouraged those who were printing the most to try and lower their usage. Another example was a change in our policy for printing training materials. In the past we provided handouts of course materials to all our training attendees. In order to save paper we decided to post our materials to the website for electronic viewing. This has drastically reduced our paper usage.

By installing a permanent LCD projector in our conference room we were able to reduce the need for printed meeting agendas and materials, and by purchasing two additional projectors for offsite meetings we were able to further reduce our need for paper consumption. We also compared the costs of printing in color versus black and white, as well as copying on our copy machine versus printing on the printer. We determined that it was cheapest to print multiple copies on our printer in black and white, as well as copying on our copy machine versus printing on the printer. We created an office standard that all print jobs should be in black and white unless absolutely necessary to print in color. We also changed the default settings for all staff to print double sided. Finally, we have begun eliminating individual printers from workstations where possible. We already primarily use our shared central printer, however we realized we could slowly phase out of individual printers which would result in an overall energy savings and a better method of tracking paper usage through a central printer.

Tips and resources

- Think about what you are printing
- Prepare to know what you need to know
- Plan to know how you can get information
- Find tools to access documents online

Resources

UW Paper Conservation
http://green.washington.edu/paper-conserv

UW Green Purchasing
http://f2.washington.edu/fm/ps/green-purchasing
**Profile in Green**

**Links**

See the SM Vision: [http://f2.washington.edu/sm/sites/default/files/sm-strategy-map.gif](http://f2.washington.edu/sm/sites/default/files/sm-strategy-map.gif)

SM provides sponsorship of high-visibility University programs, including:


Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Office [http://green.washington.edu](http://green.washington.edu)

**Suggestions and recommendations for others looking to implement a similar program**

Start small and work within the existing standards of your office. Once a few people are on board, others will follow. Track your progress as best you can by identifying areas to collect data and show improvements. Be creative and try to find ways to reduce consumption without a large financial investment. We also found that it doesn’t help to criticize individuals who are not willing to change their behavior patterns, instead we recognize those who are doing a good job and this has helped encourage others to do a better job of reducing paper consumption.

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**Did you establish any cost-savings?**

We have not quantified our savings at this point though we plan to do this soon.

**Did you experience any barriers? If so, how did you overcome them?**

The largest barriers to reducing our paper consumption have been behavioral. Most individuals in our office were eager to find ways to reduce their consumption, while a few were very hesitant. Over time this has changed and now most individuals in our office are actively trying to reduce their paper consumption.

**How do you measure success? How are you performing?**

We developed metrics for tracking printer usage for both our copier and our central color printer. We used a computer program to help track our printer usage and especially benefitted from looking at individual printing patterns. We also used the meter on our copier to track our copier usage and show employees this information.

**Were there other benefits?**

We have saved money on paper reduction, as well as toner cartridge reduction. We have also shown many of our staff how easy it is to be a little more green and this has spread beyond paper consumption to other areas like electricity usage, water usage, waste reduction, and increased composting within our office.

**What’s next on the horizon?**

We are combining our fax machine, scanner, and copier into one multi-functional machine. This will help us save energy, and further reduce paper usage by encouraging staff to scan instead of printing or copying their documents.