

Bright Green Business helps Scottish businesses recruit skilled students & graduates, improve environmental practices & develop business networks. To find out more about our other services visit our website www.brightgreenbusiness.org.uk.

Introduction

Managing your organisations waste not only entails monitoring and measuring but also looking at waste saving measures to increase recycling and save the company costs. After establishing a baseline and understanding where waste is produced, it is possible to reduce – and prevent waste accumulating.

Waste Saving Measures

Recycling

Recycling is a process to change materials (waste) into new products to prevent waste of potentially useful materials, reduce the consumption of fresh raw materials, reduce energy usage, reduce air pollution and water pollution (from landfilling) by reducing the need for "conventional" waste disposal.



Why Recycle?

- Recycling products uses less energy than making products from virgin materials.
- Recycling closes the resource loop maximising environmental and economic returns on materials such as packaging. In 2008 the UK recycled 61 % of packaging, compared to 28% in 1997, equating to 8.9 million tonnes of CO₂ savings.
- £36m of aluminium is thrown away each year. It takes 95% less energy to manufacture a drinks can from recycled aluminium than to make it from virgin ore.
- Glass is 100% recyclable and can be used again and again.
- Recycled paper produces 73% less air pollution than if it was made from raw materials. It takes 24 trees to make 1t of newspaper.
- Plastic can take up to 500 years to decompose. Using recovered plastics can save up to 25% of the costs of virgin polymers.

Minimisation

- Reducing waste where it cannot be eliminated
- Assess packaging requirements - is packaging returnable?
- Modify processes to reduce off-cuts
- Encourage electronic means of communication
- Buy in bulk
- Ensure there is a stock rotation practice
- Prevent over-ordering

How to Reduce waste production in your place of work

Paper

- Change settings on printer for double-sided printing
- Buy in recycled paper from local businesses to cut down energy used in producing new paper – this will save trees and save fuel in transportation
- Production of 1 ton of copy paper produces 5,690 lb. of greenhouse gases (the equivalent of 6 months of car exhaust).
- Remove sticky notes from the office and use scrap paper instead.



Plastic

- Buy in re-usable, washable bottles for staff to prevent plastic bottle production
- Donate bottle tops to schools for projects

Food

- Buy in what is necessary
- Recycle or compost where possible
- Link up with biodiversity gardens to use food waste as compost

Packaging

- Ask your supplier to take packaging back for reuse

Ink cartridges

- Buy in cartridges which can be re-filled or resold back to the manufacturers
- Recycle them, charities can usually take them

Office Furniture

- Donate to housing associations, charities or homeless shelters

Changing Work Practices

- Buy durable goods = less replacement e.g. CFLs, LEDs
- Use best practice benchmarks to manage consumption: e.g. 7 reams of paper/employee/year
- Identify specialist ways to minimise waste – mugs instead of plastic cups, bulk delivery
- Alterations to product design to reduce packaging around it
- Change working practices/procedures - production efficiency, reduce offcuts
- Increase the useful life of a product – e.g. bag for life
- Improved handling / operator training - reduce the risk of product damage
- Just-in-time delivery and immediate use - eliminate need for packaging to protect product in warehouse, reduce unused products

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