

Saving Resources and Money with Office Electronics

Summary

In 2009, RPN collaborated with Warner, Norcross & Judd (WN&J), a prominent Michigan based law firm, to create and implement a sustainability policy with the goal for 2010 to reduce office copier and printer paper usage by 20% and office electronics electricity usage by 10%.

This case study can inform institutions about:

- 1) **Developing a sustainability policy**
- 2) **Environmental and financial benefits**
- 3) **Obstacles to implementation**

1) Developing a sustainability policy

WN&J's sustainability policy focuses on:

- A. Paper Reduction
- B. Green Purchasing
- C. Reduced Energy Usage
- D. Education

Sustainability Best Practices

A. Paper Reduction:

- iManage electronic filing system was implemented and was used initially for e-mails and will be used for all other documents in the near future
- Duplex printing was set as the default setting for a majority of the printers
- Increased the number of documents, including some court documents that are transmitted electronically

B. Green Purchasing:

- WN&J switched from 0% recycled content paper to 30% post-consumer recycled content paper with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Green Seal certifications
- Only Energy Star rated electronics and equipment will be procured, when available

C. Reduced Energy Usage:

- The firm transitioned to more energy efficient servers

- 57 Smart Strips, surge protectors that shut off all accessories when a connected computer is turned off, were installed to reduce energy usage

D. Education:

- The Sustainability Policy, sustainability training, and presentations on the firm's sustainability initiatives were provided to all firm members

Results Realized in Just Four Months:

- ✓ Paper consumption was reduced by approximately 6%, saving approximately 500 reams of paper
- ✓ The amount of recycled content paper increased by 63%
- ✓ Energy usage decreased by 3%

2) Environmental and financial benefits

Using an EPA [Paper Calculator](#), the firm compared their recycled paper content to the same purchase volume made from virgin forest resources, and calculated the following environmental resource and energy usage savings by switching to recycled content paper and efficient office electronics during the first quarter of 2010:

Recycled content paper savings:

- ✓ 89 tons of wood use = 107 Douglas Fir trees
- ✓ 80,000 lbs of CO₂ = the equivalent of 8 cars off the road annually
- ✓ 17,000 lbs of solid waste = average trash generated by nearly 4,000 people in a day
- ✓ 342,000 gallons of water = half of an Olympic-sized swimming pool

Energy efficiency savings:

- ✓ 8,082 kWh (kilowatt hours) saved = enough to power over 2 homes for four months

3) Obstacles to implementation

- Not all printers have duplex capabilities – currently 165 printers out of 242 total printers (68%) have been successfully utilized for double-sided printing
- During the initial rollout of the iManage electronic filing system, only about 30% of employees are utilizing the program, therefore not maximizing the reduction in paper use

To learn more about saving money and environmental resources, visit us at ResponsiblePurchasing.org, click Purchasing Guides, and choose Office Electronics to access the [Responsible Purchasing Guide to Office Electronics](#).



Conclusion

WN&J garnered internal buy-in that resulted in creating a sustainability policy and implementation of sustainability best practices. It resulted in cost and resource savings. Obstacles can be encountered when instituting any new policy, but it is important to start improving sustainability practices and build from there. WN&J can continue implementing the iManage electronic filing system and duplex printing to substantially decrease paper consumption and

purchasing in the future, for example. Replacing non-duplex capable printers with those capable of duplex printing can save up to 40% of paper use per printer. Furthermore, WN&J's expansion of recycled content paper yielded substantial environmental savings.

In terms of energy efficiency, WN&J successfully reduced main office energy usage through the use of more efficient electronics and Smart Strips. Continuing education concerning reducing energy usage could be beneficial in the future, as well. WN&J has been moving down the road of sustainability and will be able to compare progress from one year to the next and build on its accomplishments.

About Warner, Norcross & Judd

www.wnj.com

Warner, Norcross & Judd is a law firm based in Grand Rapids, Southfield, Sterling Heights, Lansing, Holland and Muskegon, Michigan. First started in 1931, the firm has grown to 220 practicing attorneys.

About the Responsible Purchasing Network

www.ResponsiblePurchasing.org

RPN is an institutional membership network consisting of government agencies, businesses, universities, and nonprofit organizations dedicated to socially responsible and environmentally sustainable purchasing. RPN promotes and practices responsible purchasing by identifying best practices, developing effective purchasing tools, educating the market, and utilizing its collective purchasing power to maximize environmental stewardship, protect human health, and support local and global sustainability.

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