



Use Technology - Take the "Greener" Path

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Combine environmental concern with a desire for an increase in the bottom line and companies are looking at coloring up their business practices with "green" ideas. Some of these ideas involve technology, and if they don't, they should. Significant ways exist for a company to reduce its operating costs while helping preserve the world in which we live and work.

Businesses today rely heavily on information and reporting to operate and make sound decisions. Most of this information comes in paper form. But an increasing number of companies are looking to their software and hardware to go "paperless". If you are interested in implementing paperless solutions in your company, here are a few things to consider.

Print to electronic file output

Every print output of information from your business management system should have the ability to be stored electronically versus printed to paper using output to Adobe PDF or Microsoft XPS (XP, Vista). Even older DOS based systems have the ability to interface with a Windows printer device.

As a company, discuss how electronic filing will be structured. Think of folders on your personal computers or network drives as physical file cabinets and subfolders as drawers or hanging files in those cabinets. Organize your electronic storage as you do your paper storage. Then talk to your information technology department or outsourced IT firm and define a folder structure on your network for storage of PDF documents by department, business function or by individual. (i.e. "accounting department", "financial statements" or "Kyle's folder")

Talk to your software vendor or software business partner to discover if printing to paperless printers is supported. Some software packages offer a complete paperless solution within the product itself. Menu options for organized recall of journals, registers and reports make some paperless solutions very attractive.

Once in electronic format, these documents can be password protected and sent via email or fax directly from your PC, saving additional paper, envelopes and postage.

Use multiple monitors for screen display

Most common is the use of two monitors, but professions like graphics design, IT or engineering may require more than two for full efficiency. Multiple monitors at your workstation increase the visibility of information in several applications you may be running at one time. They conveniently allow opening of documents or emails on one screen while comparing information on the other screen. Finally, they reduce the need to print something off in order to be able to review or compare against another document or email.

Recycle hardware

Recycling sounds like something you already know about or have in place, right? But do your efforts of recycling stop at paper documents and cardboard boxes? In today's technology infused mainstream, there are other ways to contribute to a green environment by recycling more than just paper waste. You should also include hardware in your recycling program.

Technology changes fast and companies grow. Old computers and hardware equipment seem to turn as often as two to four years. Local recycling companies or specialized electronic disposal organizations will come to your office and pick up used equipment and dispose of properly. Normally, there is a fee for pickup but some organizations offer cash back for parts that are sold after breaking down the equipment. Equipment is not just limited to servers and computers. Monitors, printers, calculators and cell phones are also on the list when it comes to recycling electronics.

Check with your disposal company for procedures in de-manufacturing of your equipment. Reputable firms will ensure secure data destruction via electronic (overwriting) and physical (shredding) media disposal. Some offer Certificates of Destruction giving you assurance that your equipment is fully destroyed and no data integrity loss.

Conclusion

Check with your IT department or software provider on implementing some of the "greener" ideas using the available tools in your software or network environments. Contact your local waste management company or look online for specialized hardware disposal companies on options for your company's asset disposals. Making changes like these can help reduce operating costs and ensure your business is doing its part to conserve our environment.

If you would like more information on this topic, please contact Kyle Kunz at 888-556-0123 or kkunz@honkamp.com.

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