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How to save energy and water

A guide to helping your company improve its sustainability

Introduction

There are a number of compelling reasons why a company should make a concerted effort to reduce its water and energy consumption. It starts with environmental sustainability and cost savings. But there's also often regulatory compliance, reputation and expectations from stakeholders that play a role as well. And then there's risk mitigation, innovation and, significantly, achieving a competitive advantage.

Essentially, saving water and energy is not only an ethical responsibility but also is smart business. By actively pursuing ways to conserve water and energy, companies can contribute to a sustainable future and, at the same time, reap numerous benefits.

Making minor adjustments to the way we use energy and water can have a significant impact. It can sometimes be even small, simple measures that can reduce your company's energy and water consumption, lower operating costs, and make your offices more environmentally friendly.

This guide will provide you with an understanding of the importance of a sustainable approach in your company, how it can benefit your business and, perhaps most importantly, how you can improve your company's energy and water efficiency.

Why should my company make the effort to save energy and water?

There are a number of reasons why an investment of effort to conserve water and energy in your company can yield positive results. These include:

Saving money

cost savings for a company. By implementing efficient practices and technologies, businesses can lower their utility bills and operational expenses over time, positively impacting their bottom line. Even making minor improvements to heating, lighting and plumbing systems or encouraging simple changes toDependence on water and energy resources creates risks for businesses. Water scarcity, rising energy costs and supply chain disruptions can have adverse effects on operations. By proactively managing and conserving water and energy, companies can mitigate these risks, enhance resilience, and maintain continuity even in challenging conditions.

Innovating and improving operations

Adopting a sustainability mindset challenges companies to creatively rethink their operations, often leading to improvements in various fields throughout the company.

Embracing sustainable practices can drive innovation within a company, leading to the development of new technologies, products, and services. Energy-efficient processes and sustainable solutions can give businesses a competitive edge, attracting environmentally conscious consumers and fostering partnerships with like-minded organisations.

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Why should my company have to help the environment?

It is easy to say your company's goal is to make money, not to save the world.

But in today's market, "sustainability" is no longer a luxury for the most 'enlightened' organisations — customers, employees, investors, stakeholders and everyone else look to the business world to lead the way on environmental issues as a powerful force of change.

Climate change is happening now, and the world can no longer afford for compani employee behaviours, can significantly reduce costs.

Enhancing your brand with stakeholders

Sustainability initiatives are shown to strengthen brand affiliation for consumers as well as boosting employee morale and productivity. Additionally, investors, customers and employees increasingly expect businesses to operate in an environmentally responsible manner. By demonstrating a commitment to water and energy conservation, companies can enhance their reputation with investors, attract environmentally conscious customers and retain and attract top talent who value sustainability.

Protecting the environment

Conserving water and energy helps protect the environment by reducing the company's carbon footprint and minimising its impact on natural resources. Responsible corporate behaviour plays a critical role in mitigating the challenges of water scarcity and energy consumption.

Complying with regulations

Many jurisdictions have implemented regulations and standards related to water and energy usage, aiming to promote sustainability and reduce environmental impact. By actively managing and reducing water and energy consumption, companies can ensure compliance with these regulations and avoid penalties or legal issues.

Mitigating risk

Es to damage the environment with excessive carbon emissions or pollution.

And in any case, businesses now face a growing number of regulatory requirements that can impose strict penalties on those who refuse to comply. Embracing sustainability is not just about helping prevent climate change. It is about preparing companies to thrive in a world of tough markets, regulatory changes and increased competition.

Did you know...?

- **The average small and medium-sized business can reduce its total energy bills by 18-25% by implementing energy efficiency measures, much with zero investment.**
- **Heating is one of the most significant energy costs in an office, accounting for up to 40% of the total energy use.**
- **Switching office lighting to energy-efficient sources is a low-cost move that can cut lighting costs by 75% or more.**
- **Buildings and offices are responsible for over 40% of the world's energy usage, and a third of total greenhouse gas emissions.**

How to conserve energy and water in the office: A checklist

Did you know that heating and air conditioning is usually the largest source of energy consumption in an office, accounting for up to 40% of energy costs? Many offices can find ways to improve those numbers. Similarly, a number of simple measures can make office lighting more energy efficient. And then there is the office equipment, from computers to printers, that can be used more efficiently. Even office kitchens and bathrooms can get a conservation overhaul.

There are a myriad of big and small ways in which companies can reduce both energy and water usage throughout the office. We've compiled a checklist of ideas that you can choose to implement throughout your office:

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Mind the gaps

Keep windows closed while heating or air conditioning is on. Shut units in rooms that aren't used. Use smart heating controls that can automatically adjust the temperature based on occupancy and the outside temperature. Have a clear office policy and make sure employees understand it.

Set the right temperature

During the winter, 19°C is a good temperature for maximum comfort and energy efficiency. Hallways, storerooms and areas of greater physical activity can be set lower than 19°C. During the hot summer months, aim to cool the office at 24°C or higher. Adjusting the thermostat by just 1°C can reduce energy consumption by around 10%.

Optimise heating systems

Are your systems properly installed and up to current standards? Are tanks, boilers and pipes insulated properly so they don't lose heat? Is warm or cool air escaping through air draughts that can be closed? Small technical adjustments can lead to big energy

Change office arrangements

Radiators should be free from obstructions. Employee desks should be within a reasonable distance from radiators and air conditioning. If people complain that it is too hot or cold, you can move them closer to or farther from the temperature sources.

Turn lights off

The simplest way to save electricity is to shut lights when they are not in use. Meeting rooms and storage areas are often lit unnecessarily. You can put up signs reminding workers to shut the lights when they leave the room.

Switch to energy-efficient lighting

Energy-efficient LED light bulbs use up to 75% less energy than incandescent bulbs and last up to 25 times longer. This means they not only reduce energy consumption but also save money on replacement costs in the long run.

Consider alternative energy sources

It may be worth checking whether your office can switch to solar panels or an electricity provider that uses more renewable energy sources. If it is a viable option, renewable power sources can lead to massive cost savings over the long term, and significantly reduce your carbon footprint.

Upgrade your technology

Timers can automatically shut lights when the office is closed. Motion sensors can detect when someone is in the room and turn off lights automatically when the room is empty. These eliminate the need for employees to remember to turn off the lights when they leave a room.

Use existing light better

Can you rearrange the office to use natural light better, mitigating the need for artificial lighting? Vertical window blinds let in more light than horizontal ones. In some cases, reflective paint or lighter paint colours may brighten up a room without using electricity.

Smarter computer usage

Consider replacing desktop computers with laptops, which use considerably less electricity. Encourage staff members to shut off computers and monitors when they are not working. Activate the power-saving modes on computers, and lower the brightness on screens.

Don't print - unless you have to

Keep printers off unless they are being used, and print as infrequently as possible to avoid wasting paper.

Optimise production equipment

Keep all equipment up-to-date and well-maintained, as older devices tend to be less energy-efficient. Switch devices off when they are not in use. Label switches so that non-technical staff members can easily shut down devices properly. See if you can optimise equipment to consume energy more efficiently.

Adopt an energy efficient approach to the kitchen

Make sure the refrigerator, microwave, kettle and other appliances are energy-efficient. Avoid using devices unnecessarily. Have clear kitchen policies, and put up signs informing workers about the rules. Throw away old food regularly so the refrigerator isn't too full. Make sure the fridge door is closed properly. Set policies on which dishes should be hand-washed, and which placed in the dishwasher.

Conserve water in the bathroom

Turn off the faucet when not in use. A running tap can use more than ten litres of water a minute. Consider replacing old toilets with low-flow ones that use less water per flush. Avoid flushing items like tissues, cotton balls, and other trash down the toilet. Report any leaks you spot and make sure they are fixed promptly. If you shower at work, keep it short, and don't use hot water unless you need to.

How to conserve energy and water beyond the office

Work from home: Working from home on some days is an effective way to reduce energy consumption in the office. By allowing employees to work remotely, businesses can reduce the need for heating, cooling and lighting in the office. It also reduces the amount of transportation required, leading to lower carbon emissions and a smaller environmental footprint.

Commute: When you do come to the office, try to commute using the most energy-efficient mode possible.

Take the stairs: Taking the stairs instead of elevators is a simple way to reduce energy consumption and promote physical activity. Elevators use a significant amount of electricity, and taking the stairs instead can help to save energy and improve your health.

A commitment to conserve

There are so many ways for your company to reduce energy and water usage - in the office and beyond. All it takes is motivation, commitment and some creativity.
It can mean making even minor adjustments to the way your company uses electricity and water. These can be easy and affordable and, significantly, can yield real benefits. By improving energy and water efficiency, operating costs can be reduced, environmental performance can be increased and your company's reputation is enhanced. Don't miss this opportunity to protect our planet and deliver long-term benefits for your company, and, potentially, all of humanity.

VinciWorks' environmental sustainability training suite

By providing your team with comprehensive sustainability training, you empower them to become change agents within your organisation. Our sustainability courses go beyond mere theoretical knowledge; they delve into practical strategies and actionable insights that can be implemented across departments and levels. From understanding the principles of sustainable development to integrating sustainability into daily operations, our training equips your staff to identify opportunities for positive change, drive efficiency, and foster innovation.

Our courses

- ESG: The Basics
- ESG: Fundamentals
- Climate Change
- ESG: Practical Applications
- What is Sustainability?
- Eco-driving
- Saving Energy and Water
- Pollution
- Working Towards Zero Waste
- Non-Recyclable Waste
- Supply Chain Due Diligence
- Business Sustainability Management
- Sustainable Travel

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