

# Going green

## Making environment-friendly very wallet-friendly

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Sure, you know that using fluorescent light bulbs will save you a few bucks over the regular bulbs, but did you know commercial building owners and tenants could save \$17 billion annually by making simple lighting upgrades? Energy efficiency, environmental awareness and green manufacturing may sound like something for the hippies in Berkley, but small businesses are saving significant amounts of money by "greening-up" their business.

We all know that U.S. manufacturers are moving some operations overseas, jobs are being lost and small manufacturers are going out of business entirely. Yet 78 percent of NSBA manufacturers surveyed believe that their revenues will increase in the next year. That same study showed that nearly 60 percent of NSBA's manufacturers currently use green technologies in their operations. Perhaps this continued optimism and use of new technology will help the entire manufacturing sector and slow the movement of plants overseas.

The Manufacturing Institute compiled a comprehensive study stating that manufacturing accounts for more than 40 percent of all energy consumption in the U.S., yet nearly 85 percent of those surveyed have actually implemented energy-saving measures, and 80 percent of those did it merely for cost-savings. If you're not getting the point, we'll make it simple: going green will net you more of the green.

Below are eight quick and easy things you can do to increase your energy efficiency and impact your bottom line.

1) Just as you take your car in every 3,000 miles, be sure to conduct annual check-ups on your business. Constant awareness of where you're losing productivity and creating waste will help you save. This is especially important with your

HVAC systems.

2) Small steps - do gradual upgrades as you can afford them. Rather than junking your entire computer network for more efficient models, look at just replacing your monitors with more energy-efficient flat-screened monitors.

3) Look at your overall lighting scheme - do you light areas that don't need to be illuminated? Do all the lights have an automatic timer to turn off when you're not around? Are you using the most efficient light-bulbs?

4) Take advantage of programs designed to help businesses. The Department of Energy has a site dedicated to efficiency, providing free software to help you evaluate your energy use at <http://www.oit.doe.gov/bestpractices>. Energy Star for Small Business Program offers advice specific to small businesses at <http://www.energystar.gov>. Most appliances are available in an energy efficient model with the Energy Star seal.

5) Be aware of the equipment you already have. If every office that had an Energy Star printer used the two-sided printing option, there would be enough paper saved to go around the earth 1,400 times.

6) Yearly maintenance on your heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. Do you have heat or air running during the weekends? How leak-proof are your windows? If your HVAC system hasn't been upgraded in the last 10 years, you could be missing out on technology that would enable you to recoup the cost of an upgrade.

7) Water usage is especially important for manufacturers - implementing closed-loop systems will allow you to reuse water and decrease your water-bills.

8) Encourage your employees to be entrepreneurial in how they save energy and implement daily green-business. Their creativity may help you add to your bottom-line.

## Making green off going green

**IdleAire Technologies Corp.** allows long-haul truck drivers to heat and cool their cabs without having to idle their engines. With 1.3 million trucks operating in America, 4.4 billion gallons of diesel fuel is wasted each year when drivers stop and leave engines idling. IdleAire could save 2.4 percent of the net U.S. imported crude oil, and 51 million tons of air pollution annually. IdleAire is growing, and was named by R&D Magazine as "one of the 100 most technologically significant products introduced into the marketplace."

**NaturaLawn of America** was started in 1987 with two friends and an idea to make your lawn green in more than one way. NaturaLawn uses organic fertilizer and pesticides rather than chemical compounds to keep lawns looking green. As employees for a national lawn service that was using harmful chemicals on lawns, the two co-founders pitched their green idea and were laughed at. NaturaLawn has since opened 77 franchises, serves 45,000 customers and had 2002 revenues of more than \$25 million.

**KTMIndustries, Inc.** manufactures environmentally safe bio-plastic foams from renewable resources such as corn, wheat, rice, soy and potato. The foams are used for packing and shipping materials as well as biodegradable leggo-like toys for children. Founded by an entrepreneur and four college professors, KTM currently operates in a 40,000 square foot manufacturing facility and exports internationally. Only 5 years old, KTM has grown to more than \$3 million in annual sales.