Creating a Paper Reduction Campaign

Offices use a lot of paper, approximately 73 kilogram per person per year, so they are a prime target for waste reduction. A paper reduction campaign is a focused effort to promote paper reduction by using less paper, reusing paper where appropriate, and recycling waste paper. To make a campaign successful, management and staff participation and support are essential.

Getting Started

Form a committee to plan and carry out the paper reduction campaign; include representatives from management and all levels of staff. The committee should do the following:

- Identify quantities of different types of paper in the waste stream. Typical types of paper include white office paper, envelopes, coloured paper, newspaper, boxboard, cardboard.
- Decide your priorities, considering:
  - How much of the particular paper type contributes to your office's waste stream.
  - How you might be able to support existing waste reduction efforts.
  - Ease of implementing new waste reduction practices.
- Develop measurable goals, strategies (see below for strategy suggestions), and a timeline for implementation.
- Obtain organizational approval and support for the plan.
- Have your organization adopt a formal waste reduction policy that supports the paper reduction campaign.
- Design logos and develop slogans for use in the campaign.
- Have a formal kick-off event. Explain the campaign to all staff; announce formal goals.

Making it Work

- Implement the campaign in phases so that people aren't overwhelmed with changes. New ideas can be pilot tested in a few areas to obtain feedback before expanding office wide.
- Use volunteer section or division "leaders" who will help implement projects and take responsibility for encouraging employees in their area to practice waste reduction.
- Acknowledge and respond to people's concerns. Some ideas for reducing waste may work better than others and every office will be different.
- Be patient: new behaviors are often required to reduce waste and there may be some frustration on the part of staff or management who need to be persuaded to change the way they do things.
- Be flexible, persistent, and willing to try new ideas.

Keeping People Motivated

- Many people will have good ideas about how to reduce paper usage; ask for and encourage those ideas.
- Make the campaign fun by holding contests, posting interesting visual displays, and putting out entertaining reminders and announcements. They can be sent out through electronic mail, voice mail, routed in the office, or posted in conspicuous locations.

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- Have employees sign a pledge to reduce paper.
- Give awards for reducing paper use, good ideas, and general waste reduction efforts.
- Publicize successes. Let people know when goals are met.
- Be sure that new employees are informed about in-house waste reduction policies, practices, and projects. Give them a "new employee kit" that contains a desktop paper collection box, information about the waste reduction program, etc.

Strategies for Encouraging Reduced Paper Use

- Promote a "think before you copy" attitude. Workers should be encouraged to make sure they really need the copies they are making and not to make excess copies.
- Adopt an organizational policy that all individual documents will be two-sided (this does not mean combining documents in order to use both sides, for documents with odd-numbered pages, this will mean that the last page is blank.)
- Keep copiers and printers in good repair and make it policy to buy copiers and printers that will do two-sided copying reliably.
- Let people know that two-sided copying not only saves paper, it saves postage (from reduced mail volume) and storage space.
- Remind people to double-sided copy by posting reminders near the copiers, using interesting posters or entertaining slogans ("Two sides are better than one," "make a 2 (copies) for 1 (page) offer," "get a second impression," etc.) and changing them often to maintain interest.
- Set up computer software for default two-sided printing including word processing, spreadsheets, electronic mail, and others.
- Promote getting the most out of paper by using both sides:
  - Encourage people to save and reuse single-sided paper at their desks.
  - Collect paper that has been used on one side for reuse in copiers, printers, and fax machines and to be made into scratch pads.
- Encourage reuse of envelopes, etc. Your office can buy recyclable labels with the office address and logo to place over addresses on envelopes being reused.
- Encourage people to reuse items such as file folders at their desk; excess reusable items can be centrally collected.
- Reduce and double-side standard forms. In its effort to reduce paper, Bank of America saved significant amounts of paper by reducing and consolidating various standard forms.
- Use e-mail for forms and document transmittals. As part of their paper reduction campaign, TELUS switched its vendor billing, employee newsletter, and other documents to electronic mail, saving millions of sheets of paper annually.
- Help employees reduce the amount of unsolicited mail that they receive by following the tips provided in the fact sheet *"Steps to Eliminate Office Junk Mail"*.
- Check the Urban Impact fact sheet *"Office Paper Reduction – Quick Tips"* for more ways to reduce paper usage.

Encouraging Recycling

- Set up an office recycling program. Visit **Urban Impact** at **www.urbanimpact.com** or **call 604-273-0089** for information about getting your recyclables collected.
- Choose appropriate recycling containers. The size and style of recycling equipment varies. Urban Impact can supply a variety of small-size containers for business recycling programs and larger storage dumpsters. You may wish to purchase your own personalized recycling bins with your organization's logo or convert an existing trash container into a recycling container. Many recycling containers are made of recycled materials, so purchase and use them whenever possible.
- Locate recycling bins strategically and label them clearly. Place recycling bins in all heavy traffic areas, common work areas, and most importantly, in locations where recyclables are typically generated.
- Monitor recycling containers for contaminants on a regular basis. Also check trash cans for items that should be recycled. Focus reminders, contests etc. on any problem areas.
- Make it organizational policy to purchase and use products made with recycled materials. This "closes the recycling loop" by ensuring that there are end markets for recycled materials. Examples of paper products with recycled content are bond paper, computer paper, kraft envelopes, file folders, tissue paper products, etc.
- Ask your suppliers and contractors to make these recycled-content products available to you.
- Use savings from waste prevention efforts to offset the costs of buying recycled products in those instances where they cost more.

Want More Info?

- Visit **Urban Impact** on the web at **www.urbanimpact.com** or call **604.273.0089.**
- Or visit the **Recycling Council of BC** **www.rcbc.bc.ca** **(732-9352) REC-YCLE.**