

Better Than Recycling: Waste Prevention in the Office

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Narrator

Feel buried under paper? You're not alone. The average office worker use 10,000 sheets of paper each year. In most offices paper Whether it goes into the recycling bin or into the trash, it costs money to buy, time to handle, space to store and resources to crea

The key is to prevent waste in the first place. If you prevent waste by practicing some of the techniques we'll talk about today, yo third. If you buy only two cases of paper instead of three each month you'll save \$360 annually and as much as ten times more in mailing costs.

Today we'll visit several Oregon businesses to learn what they're doing to prevent waste. We'll talk about paper, but also show yc some of their ideas will inspire you.

The Corvallis Chamber of Commerce has changed the way it uses paper...

Patricia Mulder-Corvallis Chamber of Commerce

One of the things chambers of commerce are noted for is an incredible number of meetings... involving lots and lots of people... trying to cut down on the paper part of it at least. We've done that several ways. We used to notify people of all meetings. Sendin 8 1/2 X 11 paper in an envelope. So we cut out the envelope...turned them into tri-folds and stuck a mailing label on them. But y consuming a lot of staff time. We then moved to fax machines. Again, fax machines are slow, they take up staff time and they've latest move is to try and notify, wherever we can, people by email. It's much, much faster. Saves us tremendous dollars. We don't one at the other end is receiving a piece of paper. We've found it's been tremendously effective.

This is a pretty standard copy machine. I'm sure you could find one very similar to it in almost every office in the country. They ; you learn how to operate a duplexer which takes about 14 seconds you got that knowledge for life. And it's easy to do. The mach anyone would not do it. Our people who sit on committees appreciate it. They don't want to go home with 65 pages of paper. We recycling folks appreciate it because they get tired of hauling away our recycling. It's a win win situation for everyone. And I can

Each month we mail out about 800 newsletters to members. This keeps them updated on what we're doing. In the past these went self mailers as you can see there's just a little box down on the bottom page...back page...and the mailing label goes on and it all inserts we just stick a staple in and the whole thing goes. This saved us about \$340 a year in envelopes and about \$50 in excess p but for a non profit it's a lot of money.

Narrator

The Detlefsen Law office cuts paper waste by reducing copies of its invoice forms from three to two; by using the blank side of t reusing manila envelopes. The firm also changed the way it printed invoices.

Jeff Detlefsen-Detlefsen Law Office

To some extent in a leap of faith I decided that even though some of my invoices are for large amounts they did not have to be re work I had done. But I could in fact reduce the paper in half by just going single space. And it was more compact. And I haven't

were not as valuable because the amount of paper in their invoice was smaller than before.

Narrator

Electronic media can cut down on paper and improve communications with members and employees. Oregon's own Mentor Graphics and directories to their intranet.

Kristen Beach-Mentor Graphics

We used to print out a lot of things on paper that are now on the intranet. For instance these manuals. They were given out to each employee and printed out once a month for 75 employees. At 150 sheets of paper per manual that's 135,000 sheets of paper per year. That's expensive. Now this is available on line for each employee. It saves time, you don't have to flip through the manuals anymore. They also don't have to use a mouse you can find any person's name in our company's directory.

Our buying guide, our purchasing manual, is also given to each employee. But now it is online as well. Many of our vendors are instead of filling out this three page requisition. It's much easier and it's much more time efficient as well as saving paper. Our new one is online. It's easier to use and more efficient and it's updated regularly so it doesn't have to be printed out for each employee every year.

Narrator

The Corvallis Chamber of Commerce enjoys the convenience of email.

Patricia Mulder-Corvallis Chamber of Commerce

We have a thing called "Just the Facts" which is an update on city policy. We put that out every Friday afternoon. We used to do it on a computer to churn this stuff out. We could only do it on Friday's because it took so long. And it resulted in paper on the other end. Now it's email and we're hoping to be completely electronic on it very, very soon. We can put it out anytime we want. If there's a breaking news item it's cheaper. It's faster. And everybody's happier. We really believe in email.

Narrator

Mentor Graphics also reduced the amount of mail their staff had to handle and helped save resources for its vendors.

Kristen Beach-Mentor Graphics

Like every large corporation we have our share of employee turnover. We still receive mail for employees who are no longer here. But now every two weeks we have about 150 pieces. We achieved this by taking the mail for the employees who are no longer here. The sender with a stamp saying...please remove this person from your mailing list they are no longer with our company. This has drastically reduced mail in our mail room.

Narrator

The Detlefsen Law office saves paper handling by using a fax stamp instead of a cover page.

Jeff Detlefsen-Detlefsen Law Office

For many documents we'll have a fax cover sheet which is a whole other piece of paper. But we found by using a stamp that we could document that we were faxing and reduce a piece of paper to go out in the fax machine.

Narrator

Using a web site to communicate with customers, investors and clients can save paper and staff time, while making information more available.

Kristen Beach-Mentor Graphics

This is our annual report now with it being on the web we saving in printing, shipping and handling costs. It's easier for share holders to research our company.

Patricia Mulder-Corvallis Chamber of Commerce

One of the things Chambers do is they put out relocation boxes for folks who are interested in moving to their city. Our box costs \$10. It's got a lot of paper in it. It takes up a lot of storage space here on site...keeping a stock of them on. We've instituted a new relocation program at the end of January 2001 which should answer most of the needs of people interested in relocating. It'll save us six dollars per mail box in addition people on the other end who are interested in relocating to Corvallis Oregon can hop on the web site and get most of the information for the mail. They're happy and we're happy.

Norm Thompson Shipping/Receiver Worker

We're in the shipping and receiving department of Norm Thompson Early Winters and Solutions where the vendors send their products in the boxes that come in with item inside them wrapped nice and neat so they don't get broken. We have paper...then the item is actually wrapped in bubble wrap. We have packaging peanuts in the bottom to protect it. All of these items are recycled and reused by us and other people in the area.

We'll bring'em over here. The paper goes into the round file. The bubble wrap goes in here. And then the packaging peanuts are collected. When it's full we remove that and we send this to a pottery shop in Portland Oregon where they send their pottery back out with the peanuts and put into a container that's taken outside and the recycled. And we have the program where we actually take the item and send it back with the packaging materials that's left over...the paper mainly. We don't like to send this back. And the bubble wrap.. we send to the Eps plant.

Narrator

There are many ways to reduce the waste your office creates and so far, we've only mentioned a few. To find other opportunities for waste reduction yourself...can we reuse things we already have?

Jeff Detlefsen-Detlefsen Law Office

Another opportunity for waste reduction is using a plain paper fax instead of the chemical paper on rolls. You can reuse individual sheets of paper.

Narrator

Can we use what we have more effectively? Mentor Graphics "Save on Supplies" room allows employees to return supplies they don't need.

Can we encourage our suppliers to stock earth friendly and recycled content item? Retailer Norm Thompson works with its vendors to encourage products to its customers.

Derek Smith-Norm Thompson

A big part of our goal around sustainability...we call it influence...so any time we can encourage others to join us and show them we do that. We also have purchasing criteria around what we call environmental value for our products. So as our buyers go out to look for products, they think about offering our customers products with recycled content, products that are recyclable, reusable, durable, etc.

Narrator

The Oregon Zoo uses a post card to inform vendors when it receives over-packaged items. The card encourages vendors to change their packaging.

Can we reduce the amount or toxicity of this item? This applies to cleaning supplies as well as to printer and copier inks, pens and markers.

Artist John Maher has switched adhesives to lower his use of toxic materials.

John Maher-Maher Fine Art

In terms of toxic reduction...this spray adhesive is what I used to use to mount my prints. It's very nasty stuff. Bad for the lungs. I've found some way to replace it. What I found was a roll on adhesive. Non toxic, archival—won't get brittle—lasts forever and no fumes here. Rolls on to the print... and it's ready to go. No fumes as I said and no cans either when you are finished with it.

Narrator

Can we use fewer disposable products?

Printing paper is not the only waste item found in office trash. Coffee service and lunchrooms can also generate waste.

Patricia Mulder-Corvallis Chamber of Commerce

We're in our conference room now. We have between two and three meetings a day in this room...between 5 and 15 people attend every meeting and everyone of them drinks coffee. We used to serve our coffee in those waxed paper cups. We found that people don't really like disposable cups so we've also found that it generated an awful lot of waste. It filled up our dumpster really fast. We've got about four years on the menu through the dishwasher. And everybody is much happier.

Narrator

Retailer and catalog merchandiser Norm Thompson also prevents kitchen waste.

Mary Daly-Norm Thompson

Here at Norm Thompson in our headquarters we have a main kitchen on the first floor. We also have a smaller kitchen on the second floor stocked with silver ware, plastic bowls and plates for employees' use. Each one also has an energy efficient dishwasher. An each

Thompson mug. And in providing these for employees we save over \$9,000 each year. And we prevent over 110,000 paper cups

Narrator

Waste prevention saves money, saves labor, saves storage space and saves natural resources and energy. We don't need to choose between protecting the environment—the two go together. Look around your office today and see where you can put waste saving ideas in

Go beyond the bin. Stop waste before it begins.

To learn how to start your own waste prevention program contact your city or county recycling coordinator or your Oregon Department of Environmental Quality office.