

Tips for becoming a sustainable small business

Most businesses could use less energy and water, produce less waste and emissions and make significant savings by a few simple actions. These tips will help you get started.

Talk to your staff!

Whether you have a couple of employees or 50, your staff are your most valuable resource in becoming a sustainable business. Ask your staff what your business could do to help the environment and become more sustainable. You will be surprised what ideas they come up with.

HOT TIP

Have a coffee morning and invite staff to share their ideas about being green.

Check your meters!

You can use less energy and make significant savings by making a few simple changes. However before working out where to look for savings, you need to know how much energy your business is currently using. Monitoring your energy use can tell you when your peak times of energy use are. It should go down outside core business hours – if not check why.

HOT TIP

Turn off lights and equipment when not in use, especially at the end of the day.

Fix those dripping taps!

For most non-manufacturing businesses the largest waste of water occurs in the washrooms and toilets. Ensure all taps and other water-using appliances are turned off when not in use. If the tap or other water-using appliance continues to use water when it is off, check if a washer needs replacing.

HOT TIP

To avoid the risk of a tap being left on, fit automatic push-tap controls.

What's in your waste!

Have a look in your waste bin or skip just before it is collected. You'll probably find lots of materials which can be reused or recycled – some on your own site. However, waste is not just what is discarded into a bin or skip - consider wastage from unused raw materials, inefficiencies in processing and wasted labour. The real cost of waste is often 5 to 20 times the cost of its disposal.

HOT TIP

Remove individual rubbish bins and place marked bins in communal areas that are clearly labelled with what can and can't be recycled.

Talk to your suppliers!

Environmental credentials are becoming more and more relevant to businesses. Ask your suppliers what they are doing. Consider asking for products that are from renewable, recycled or sustainable sources.

HOT TIP

Look for eco-labels on the products, services and materials you buy.

Get involved in your community!

Contributing to local initiatives – financially or through volunteer hours – creates goodwill and boosts the local economy. Maintaining the local environment will contribute to the well-being of your staff and the community.

HOT TIP

Allow your staff to spend a certain number of days each year doing voluntary work.



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mo Te Taiao

sustainability
.**govt.nz**

Sustainable business service providers

There are a number of organisations that your business can talk to about sustainability. Services include the provision of advice, support, networking opportunities, resources, training and advocacy.



The Sustainable Business Network (SBN) provides affordable assistance for businesses who wish to learn more about being sustainable. SBN provides networking opportunities, training and business assessments through the 'Get Sustainable Challenge'.

www.sustainable.org.nz



New Zealand Business Council
for Sustainable Development

The **New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development**, in addition to major policy research projects, produces practical guides like how to measure and manage emissions, buy sustainable paper, undertake triple bottom line reporting, and support youth employment. An annual series of training workshops is also available.

www.nzbcسد.org.nz



New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) provides a wide range of services to businesses with high growth potential. Through its network of offices worldwide, NZTE aims to improve the international competitiveness and sustained profitability of New Zealand businesses by providing access to people, knowledge and opportunities.

www.nzte.govt.nz



Landcare Research offers a number of sustainability tools and products for business, including the carbonZero certification programme.

www.landcareresearch.co.nz

the **NATURAL STEP**

The Natural Step (TNS) has developed a framework that helps organisations understand what sustainability means for their business. TNS provides an internationally proven methodology for incorporating strategies and identifying new solutions that steer businesses towards sustainability.

www.tns.org.nz



Energy Efficiency and
Conservation Authority
Te Tari Tiaki Pūngao

The **Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA)** has a range of programmes to help businesses improve their energy use.

www.eeca.govt.nz



For general information on sustainable business practices you can also visit the Ministry for the Environment business website.

www.sustainability.mfe.govt.nz

In many areas you can also contact your local council or local economic development agency for support and advice around sustainable business practices.