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How HR does Green!

You don't need to read yet another article about how being a "green" company is noble, respectable, perhaps, even virtuous. Employers who make the environment a priority are seen as leaders and the new pillars of the community. Let's remember the basics: green is the right thing to do. It is what we *must* do to leave our planet in better shape than when we got here.

There are advantages to being "green." Green can help attract and retain employees. It can secure a favorable reputation with the community and consumers, and is a smart and easy marketing tool.

HR provides the strategy and can take responsibility for spearheading green initiatives. By aligning the values of the company and its employees with the environment, HR helps build a global citizenship, and further develops the corporate culture. Support from senior management is essential. Green should be ingrained into the organization's values and everyday work life.

HR can help create a green workplace that does not take a big bite out of the budget. Some methods even save money:

- Add green, tax savings plans, for example, the Bicycle Commuter Benefit.
- Raffle a bicycle to raise funds for a green cause.
- Use real cutlery and dishes, not plastic and paper. You will save money and also help reduce your carbon footprint.
- Make duplex photocopies on re-cycled paper—and use lighter ink settings.
- Re-use non-duplex printed materials that are not of a sensitive nature, and make scrap paper pads. Make it policy that this should be the only notepaper used for in-company note-taking.

- E-mail notices, memos and reminders. Save time, trees, paper, electricity and landfills.
- Add a green column to every issue of the company newsletter, and distribute it via e-mail.
- Welcome, reward and publicize conservation ideas that result in green solutions for your workplace and community.
- Place a sign by the front door reminding employees to “power down” equipment before leaving the building.
- Share the savings from electric bills with employees, or place those funds in an account to give to a green cause.
- Sponsor a tree planting in a nearby park.
- Be responsible for keeping your street clean as part of a community initiative.
- Become a member of the “Adopt a Highway” Program.
- When renewing a rental lease, look to one of the green buildings cropping up all over NYC.

HR professionals can begin efforts within their own departments by sending clear, consistent, and concise green messages. Ask employees to use the same eco-smarts at work that they use at home. Develop a Green Workplace Initiative—and be sure it becomes part of the everyday workplace. Encourage your green corporate culture!