5 Tips for Creatively Going Green With Your Business

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Going green is no longer just a niche catchphrase. It has become an increasingly mainstream part of doing business. In fact, in one recent study, 78 percent of Americans said they would be more likely to purchase environmentally friendly products, with 64 percent also willing to pay more for these products.

Clearly, an environmental focus in business doesn't just help the environment — it can also have a direct impact on your bottom line. When you make sustainability a key focus of your business ventures, you will become much more appealing to customers who share similar values.

Fortunately, there are many ways your company can go green.

1. Rethink product packaging

Product packaging is one of the biggest sources of waste. As a report from Business News Daily notes, 77 percent of customers feel that plastic is not environmentally responsible when packaging products. Conversely, paper was considered the most eco-friendly packaging option as it is more easily recyclable. Something as simple as replacing packing peanuts with paper can reduce the environmental impact of your packaging.

Smaller packaging design can further reduce your environmental impact, simply by consuming fewer raw materials. Eco-focused brands will often highlight their sustainability efforts (and encourage customers to recycle the packaging) right on the

box.

2. Source materials from local suppliers

The supply chain can be a major source of a business's carbon footprint. Mainly because of the pollution that is produced to transport supplies and materials to your facility. This is most commonly seen with food, where initiatives to buy local aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And this can be done simply by limiting how many miles food travels to get to someone's dinner plate.

However, the same can be accomplished with any other supplies or materials your business might need. An emphasis on local sourcing will reduce your carbon footprint while also supporting your local economy – likely a key driver of your own company's success. You can further improve the sustainability of your materials by sourcing from eco-conscious suppliers that have enacted their own green initiatives.

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3. Minimize the impact of your products

For businesses that manufacture their own products, identifying ways to minimize the waste potential of their products should be a top priority for going green. The use of biodegradable or recyclable materials ensures that your products don't add to millions of tons of landfill waste generated in the U.S. each year.

4. Reevaluate your energy sources

The energy sources you use to power your office and run your business's most vital processes significantly impacts your carbon footprint. Renewable energy sources such as rooftop solar and wind have become more accessible than ever. Both can serve as valuable long-term investments for going green.

Many utility providers use coal and natural gas, which combine to produce billions of metric tons of CO2 emissions each year. Switching to solar or other renewable sources is your way to ensure that your electricity is sourced sustainably.

In the U.S., these green investments also qualify businesses for tax credits that offset the cost of the installation. The federal solar investment tax credit currently provides a credit for 26 percent of the cost of a new system that begins construction in 2022. However, this credit drops to 22 percent in 2023 and 10 percent in 2024 – so the sooner you implement this, the better.

5. Find sustainable solutions to common service needs

Another option for going green is to come up with a green version of a service-based business. For example, an environmentally friendly landscaping business would avoid the use of chemical herbicides and use electric equipment instead of gas-powered equipment. An organic catering company would use organic, locally-grown foods for area events. Sustainability consultants can advise other businesses on key steps they can take to go green.

These examples are just a few ways that a service-oriented business could provide a more sustainable offering to its customers. In this case, your efforts to go green become the key differentiating feature that sets your company apart from

other competitors within the niche. Ample opportunities exist for both B2B and B2C companies.

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How will you go green?

As these examples illustrate, going green can be embedded into your company’s identity from the ground up. Consider how you can improve your impact on the environment in every facet of your business. You can find creative solutions and carve out a unique niche within your market.

By proactively striving to go green, you can help the planet and become a valued asset to others who are trying to reduce their impact on the environment.

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