

Earth Day 2023: Why Sustainability is a Win-Win for the Environment and Your Business



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Businesses of all shapes and sizes have a lot on their plate, and many neglect planning to make a positive impact on the environment as it can be challenging to see immediate value. With Earth Day coming up, now is the perfect time for businesses to reflect on their ESG goals and assess the best ways their company can make a difference in combating environmental challenges and gaining rapport with their customers.

In doing so, businesses, small and large, will realize

sustainable practices don't just benefit the environment but also their business. For example, it's just good business to reduce your energy consumption, and when you do, you can reduce your bills.

Furthermore, consumers increasingly support climate-positive initiatives and want to support companies that do good in addition to making purchases that help the environment. Recent studies show that more than 60% of US consumers would pay more for a product with sustainable components, and 78% of US consumers say that a sustainable lifestyle is important to them. Therefore, companies must adapt their business to accommodate the growing consumer demand to ensure continued long-term success.

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Here are five steps to making sustainability a priority and an integral part of your business.

1. Implement sustainable packaging

Reduce packaging or use recycled/reusable packaging where possible. In recent years, an increasing number of companies – from small start-ups to large corporations – have switched from single-use plastic to more environmentally friendly materials to reduce their environmental impact and carbon footprint. Seek out FSC-certified packaging, look for plastic-free options, and if purchasing in large quantities, ask about bulk packaging to minimize waste.

In addition to the benefits of sustainable packaging, optimizing the supply chain – choosing a mode of transportation that can help reduce carbon footprints, such as ocean freight or cargo flights that use sustainable aviation fuel, can make a difference.

2. Seek out more sustainable alternatives

Buy and use technology and products that prioritize sustainability. When in the market for new office necessities, be aware of recycled materials and components and make a conscious effort to seek out products that may be a more sustainable option.

Also, beware of “greenwashing” – when companies market their products to be more environmentally friendly than they are. With consumer demand exploding for more sustainable products, many marketers have pivoted their strategy to make theirs more appealing and, at times, can overstate the actual “green” aspects of the said product. Therefore, businesses and consumers should look for the details and a breakdown of specifics behind every claim, particularly as innovations emerge.

On that same note, companies should do their part and be careful on wording and use of terms like “environmentally friendly.” By its nature, technology and other related products are not friendly to the environment, but making significant efforts to reduce impact is what businesses should look for in vendors. Stay vigilant.

3. Reduce emissions when possible

Work remotely, when possible, to reduce emissions caused by commuting. With more and more companies – from large enterprises to small to medium-sized businesses – announcing their return to the office, either in a hybrid or full-time capacity, many folks are back to spending a good chunk of their day driving to and from their jobs.

If you and your employees have to commute, encourage alternative modes of transportation that can help reduce one’s

carbon footprint: carpooling, public transportation, riding a bicycle or walking, and low-emission/zero-emission cars are all great options to explore if compatible with your commute or budget.

4. Support causes to make an impact

Donate to an environmental organization or cause that aligns with your brand. When thinking of the best ways for your business to support the sustainability cause, consider supporting an area where your brand can impact (i.e., the automobile industry helping cut down emissions, CPG companies investing in recyclable packaging, etc.). If needed, also look for vendors who can assist or offer services to offset carbon emissions, especially for larger projects that need to be outsourced.

Ensuring an organic fit between your business and your cause will help the environment and position your brand as an authentic partner in the collective effort to fight for sustainability.

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5. Encourage mindful habits

Prevent over-consumption and wasteful practices. Regardless of how large or small your organization is, it's key to reducing unnecessary waste. Incorporating simple practices such as encouraging refillable water bottles, going paperless, or simply turning the lights off after leaving a facility may seem ridiculous to some. Still, over time, it can make a difference.

Lastly, encourage employees to bring forward their ideas for increasing sustainability in the office and beyond – that way,

no stone is left unturned or overlooked. When united with their body of employees, businesses are bound to establish a stronger response to combat over-consumption and waste.

Related: Sustainability and Profitability Can Co-Exist: 3 Keys to Growing a Green Business

Saving the planet is not just good for the world; it's good for business – reflect on your sustainability goals this Earth Day to set your business up for long-term success that makes a lasting impact.

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