

## TOPIC C: THE GREEN WORKPLACE

A greener workplace can mean a healthier and a more productive place to work. A “green” business strives to have a positive impact on the environment and community. It develops and practices business strategies that go beyond regulation and demonstrate commitment to a healthy and sustainable future. A green business adopts principles, policies, and practices that improve the quality of life for customers and employees. It means "environmental sustainability" which includes:

- Practicing Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
- Water Conservation
- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
- Using Transportation Alternatives
- Sustainability Management

Sustainability is the capacity to endure

Below is a list of the most common practices of obtaining a green work environment:

- Advocating for environmental sustainability
- Carbon neutral living (a lifestyle that strives for zero carbon emissions)
- Energy-efficient buildings, products and practices
- Proper hazardous waste disposal to reduce toxins in the waste stream
- Life-cycle analysis to know what a product is made from, what its useful life will be, and how it will be disposed of
- Landscaping with plants that are native, perennial, and drought-resistant
- Management policies, procedures and practices that protect the environment
- Purchasing/Growing local/organic food to reduce pollution and the energy needed to transport it long distances
- Purchasing products made from recycled, sustainable, and non-toxic materials and reusing and recycling everything possible
- Renewable energy installation (after energy-efficiency goals are achieved)
- Transportation alternatives that reduce or eliminate fuel consumption
- Vegetated roofs and walls, and local gardens
- Waste reduction policies and procedures
- Water conservation

**GBK26**

**Revision 8.1**

**Work Certified™ 1.2016**

**GBK27**

**Revision 8.1**

**Work Certified™ 1.2016**

# THE GREEN WORKPLACE

## Value of a Green Workplace

Going green makes business sense. Natural resources are becoming more scarce and costly, while customers, employees and investors are increasingly environmentally-conscious. Customers admire green business practices and the demand for environmentally-friendly products is high and rising. During the past five years, purchase of green products has continued to increase and more consumers were willing to pay a higher price for green products if they were considered to be of higher quality.



Going green can be cost-effective, too. Even at the most basic level, programs that reduce, reuse and recycle frequently lead to cost savings. More expansive efforts offer a tremendous opportunity to reduce basic costs and can give a company a competitive edge.

Environmentally-conscious business practices help attract and retain the best employees by increasing employee satisfaction and pride in the workplace. Community involvement is also an important cornerstone for many companies, and green practices enhance public image, community relations and good will.

## Green and the economy

*“Taking a hard look and answering tough questions about a business’ practices can save lots of dough. According to NRDC, **Bank of America** reduced the weight of its ATM receipts from 20 pounds to 15 pounds, saving paper, transportation, and storing and handling costs, to the tune of \$500,000 a year.”*

While economic recessions are difficult, they also provide a window for new business ventures and an opportunity to establish a new position within the market. Resources become more affordable, human resources are more abundant, and customers become more willing to reconsider suppliers and consider alternative products. This is a great time to go green and position a business as an environmental leader.

## The Formation of a Green Team

Just as more and more businesses are adding Sustainability Officers, growing numbers are developing employee “green teams” to help guide them on the green business path. A green team is a group of employees working to promote sustainable practices at the workplace. A diverse green team with upper management support can build initiatives based on individual, group and company capabilities and strengths. Green team initiatives can range from grass-roots efforts that focus on ways to improve internal operations, to more formalized programs and the development of policies and environmental management systems that provide a framework to measure progress, assess impacts, and continually improve results.



**GBK28**

**Revision 8.1**

**Work Certified™ 1.2016**

**GBK29**

**Revision 8.1**

**Work Certified™ 1.2016**

## TOP 10 GREEN OFFICE TIPS

These easy green office tips can help save energy, money and resources!



1. **Be bright about light:** Turn off the lights when you're leaving any room for 15 minutes or more and utilize natural light when you can.
2. **Maximize computer efficiency:** Each year, computers in the business sector waste \$1 billion worth of unnecessary electricity. Program computers to go to sleep after 15 minutes of inactivity.
3. **Print smarter:** The average U.S. office worker goes through 10,000 sheets of copy paper a year. Use PDFs where possible and make sure printers are programmed to print on both sides of the paper.
4. **Responsible Disposal:** Any electronic waste that can't be refurbished should be disposed of properly.
5. **Ramp up your recycling:** Almost any kind of paper you would encounter in an office, including fax paper, envelopes, and junk mail, can be recycled.
6. **Conserve Water:** Installing low-flow fixtures and aerators on faucets in your building will conserve gallons of water each year.
7. **Watch what (and how) you eat:** Provide reusable dishes, silverware, and glasses. Offer filtered water and encourage employees to avoid plastic bottles.
8. **Rethink your travel:** Take the train, bus, or subway when feasible instead of a rental car when traveling on business.
9. **Reconsider your commute:** Make it easy for employees to take alternative modes of transportation to get the office by subsidizing commuter checks, offering bike parking, or organizing a carpool board.
10. **Create a healthy office environment:** Use non-toxic cleaning products and brighten up your office with plants, which absorb indoor pollution.

**Are you ready to help your employer go green?**

GBK30

Revision 8.1

Work Certified™ 1.2016

# THE GREEN COLLAR WORKFORCE

Green-collar jobs—jobs dedicated to saving energy, producing renewable energy, or reducing pollution—can speed progress on two deeply-rooted problems at once: easing our dependence on climate-warming fossil fuels and fostering lasting, broadly-shared economic prosperity.



In the U.S., 5.3 million jobs have been created by individuals and companies practicing environmental management and protection, according to a 2006 study by Management Information Services Inc., a Washington, D.C., research firm that has been tracking green jobs for two decades.

Those jobs include such titles as chief sustainability officer, solar-panel installer and software engineer, on top of more traditional environmental careers in wastewater treatment and hazardous materials management. Those workers already make up a sizable part of the economy. The 5.3 million figure is almost half the number of people employed by hospitals, and nearly a third of the number in construction. It's 10 times the number of jobs in the pharmaceutical industry.

## How a Green Workforce Was Born

The U.S. House of Representatives passed an energy bill in August 2007 that included a provision directing millions of dollars toward training a "green" workforce. The Green Jobs Act of 2007 supports a national and state program to train workers in areas such as bio-fuel development, energy efficient buildings, renewable power, solar panel installation and energy efficient cars. The program gives priority to workers impacted by federal energy and environmental policy, veterans, the unemployed and at-risk youths, among others. It could create three million jobs and help increase knowledge and skills vital to the growth of the renewable energy and efficiency industries.

Various sectors of business and industry need green-specific job training and workforce preparation for a steady supply of workers. These sectors include construction, engineering, design, renewable energy sources, transportation and agriculture.

Most green jobs today require at least a high school diploma and some college. As in any new industries, the requirements for positions in the green industries will require a set of skills and educational qualifications that are derived from other disciplines and fields. With the rapidly increasing demand for skilled labor to fill green collar jobs, many community colleges and trade schools across America are now beginning to offer training programs for green collar jobs, adapting educational programs and training choices from existing certificate programs, associate degrees, apprenticeships, technical education programs and service-learning protocols.

Ready for something new in  
a career?

Consider these industries  
and green job development  
and training opportunities....

**GBK31**

**Revision 8.1**

**Work Certified™ 1.2016**

**GBK32**

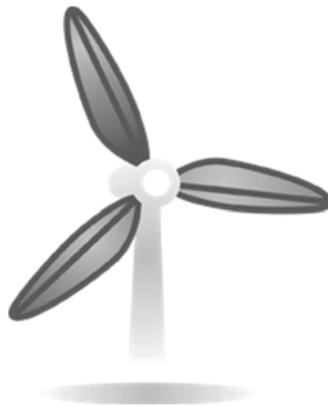
**Revision 8.1**

**Work Certified™ 1.2016**

For an employer, having sustainably-oriented employees offers several competitive advantages:

- **More inspired problem solving:** Employees trained in sustainability are more confident in developing business decisions and searching for innovative solutions when faced with problems related to climate change.
- **Increased desirability as an employer:** As a desirable green employer in your community, you'll have your pick of the green talent pool - individuals who already understand sustainability and have practice in maximizing people, planet, and profit through business strategy.
- **More flexible budgets:** Many employees who are committed to sustainable careers are amenable to flexible compensation and benefits, often preferring alternative transportation, flexible work schedules, and other low-cost benefits over an increase in cost of living.
- **Improved employee retention rates:** Many green companies these days boast low turnover rates compared to their non-sustainable counterparts. In a green workplace survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 61% of those responding who work for an environmentally-conscientious company said they were "likely" or "very likely" to stay at the business because of those practices.

**“.....going green...it just makes sense.....”**



**GBK33**

**Revision 8.1**

**Work Certified™ 1.2016**