

10 Simple Ways to Cut Energy Costs:

A Guide For Small Businesses

There are a number of ways to save energy and reduce the energy costs for your small business. Here are 10 things you can do at little or no cost to you!

Low Cost:

Use natural light



Take advantage of the free light and heat provided by the sun. Turn off lights in areas that have access to natural light. Adjusting the blinds on windows can help heat a room for free or it can keep it cool when needed.

⇒ Potential Savings: This is difficult to measure as each building is unique. As lighting accounts for 25-45 percent of energy consumption, the financial savings can be considerable.

Turn off office equipment during non-business hours



This includes computers, printers, copiers, coffee makers, etc. Take a walk around the building or office and make a list of everything plugged into the wall. Then create a checklist of all equipment that can be shut off at night. Even better, unplug all unused equipment to prevent phantom energy consumption (see tip #10).

⇒ Potential Savings: According to a study done by APS (Arizona's largest supplier of electricity), powering off a desktop computer, a 15" monitor, a laser printer and a small copier can save a business about \$155 annually.¹

Put your computer to sleep



Screen savers do NOT save energy, so take advantage of power saving features by going into the System Preferences of your computer. Customizing it to sleep after 5 or ten minutes of no use is easy. This is so convenient as it only takes a second for the computer to "wake up" and you can start your work right from where you left off without losing any information.

⇒ Potential Savings: The EPA & DEP say that using sleep mode during working hours can save \$25-\$75 per desktop computer.² Check out the following link to calculate your computer's energy savings: <http://pmdb.cadmusdev.com/powermanagement/quickCalc.html>

Locate your thermostats



Give yourself easy access to controlling the temperature in your business space. Find your thermostats and be sure they are not hidden behind bulky furniture or other items. This will make it more convenient for you to monitor the room temperatures and be certain to adjust areas not being used.

⇒ Potential Savings: www.fypower.org (California's statewide energy outreach campaign) tells us we can save up to 20% in heating and cooling costs by adjusting the heating system to 68 degrees F in winter and the cooling system to 78 degrees F in summer.³

Use your laptop



If you have a choice, use a laptop in place of a desktop computer. They use a significant less amount of energy to run.

⇒ Potential Savings: Every computer is different, but National Geographic's Greenhouse tips tells us we can save up to 50% in energy consumption when choosing to use a laptop over a desktop.

Low Cost Ways to Save:

Install occupancy sensors



Motion detectors can be pretty inexpensive and easy to install. Use them in rooms such as bathrooms, conference rooms, storage closets, hallways, etc to be sure the lights are off when rooms are unoccupied.

⇒ Potential Savings: Installing occupancy sensors can save up to 40% on your lighting costs (www.fypower.org)

Install programmable thermostats



These not only save you energy and money, they are also pretty convenient. You will not have to constantly monitor temperatures throughout your business space and you do not have to worry about someone forgetting to turn down the heat when they leave at the end of the day.

⇒ Potential Savings: More than 20% - refer to tip #4.

Replace lights in exit & emergency signs



Obviously, these signs need to be on 24/7, but you can still save a significant amount of energy by replacing the incandescent lights in exit signs with LED lights.

⇒ Potential Savings: In California, changing to LED lights in exit signs can save \$20 per year per light. (www.fypower.org)

Replace your light bulbs



Energy efficient light bulbs are all the rage for good reason. They add up to quick savings on your lighting bills. If you haven't already, purchase compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) and replace your existing inefficient bulbs.

⇒ Potential Savings: Replacing 25% of your light bulbs to CFLs can result in approximately 50% savings on your lighting bill. (www.eia.doe.gov)⁴



Use power strips



Plug your office equipment into power strips and stop paying for energy not being used during non-business hours. When computers, copiers, and most appliances are plugged into outlets, they still pull a minimal amount of power out of the wall even when they are shut off (known as phantom or vampire loads).

⇒ Potential Savings: Phantom energy accounts for 5% of energy consumed in the United States.⁵

References:

¹ http://www.aps.com/main/_files/services/BusWaysToSave/OfficeEquipment.pdf

² www.energystar.gov

³ www.fypower.org

⁴ www.eia.doe.gov

⁵ <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/everyday/greenhouse/tips.html>