



10 TIPS TO REDUCE YOUR ORGANISATION'S CARBON FOOTPRINT

There is a common goal among building owners, facilities managers, executives and real estate developers - to have a building that works more efficiently, sustainably and profitably. Reducing the company's carbon footprint is a sure way to reach an important part of that target.

The benefits of operating efficiently and sustainably are increasing. Not only does it improve an organisation's carbon footprint and its impact on the environment but it also improves the corporate image. And by recognising the importance of operating efficiently and implementing steps to become a 'green' organisation, the company immediately becomes a more desirable business partner. Additionally, there are financial benefits achieved by saving money through lower energy and operational costs.

The first step is to quantify the organisation's carbon footprint. Online tools enable users to enter information about electricity, gas and diesel fuel usage, fleet size and vehicle fuel consumption, and renewable energy generation. The consolidated data then provides an accurate measurement of the organisation's total carbon footprint.

The next step is to develop and implement a carbon management and sustainability strategy. Installing more efficient heating, cooling and lighting systems, building state-of-the-art central utility plants, and deploying renewable energy technologies such as photovoltaic (PV) solar panels can all contribute to reducing energy consumption, fossil fuel dependence and carbon emissions.

Another way to reduce an organisation's carbon footprint is to reduce the real estate footprint. This can be done by consolidating where possible and eliminating unneeded facilities. By reducing the square footage, the energy usage and carbon emissions are reduced. Numerous other programs can be implemented to conserve natural resources and reduce carbon emissions - such as recycling and using less paper.

Here are 10 ways to reduce an organisations carbon footprint to minimise its impact on the environment:

- 1. Consider investing in renewable energy technologies to become less dependent on the grid** - this is good for the economy, environment and energy security. Using renewable energy technologies can increase owner revenue, revitalise rural communities and reduce dependence on the power grid - all without consuming natural resources or emitting pollution or greenhouse gases.
- 2. Promote recycling** - establish a recycling programme and distribute recycling containers around buildings and/or campuses to encourage separation of waste and recyclable items.
- 3. Make cleaning and maintenance greener** - reduce the environmental impact of in-building operations such as cleaning, pest management, and maintenance by using more environmentally-friendly cleaning products and organic, synthetic filters for equipment.

4. **Host meetings with minimal environmental impact** - host environmentally friendly meetings that encourage telemeetings. In-person meetings should be held at green hotels that serve pitchers instead of bottles water, reuse name badges, and donate unused food to local food pantries.
5. **Offer telecommuting options to employees** - establish a telecommuting programme allowing employees to work from home 1-5 days a week.
6. **Institute flexi time** - encourage flexi time which will stagger start/end times so that employees can avoid getting stuck in rush hour traffic, use less gas and reduce carbon emissions.
7. **Increase employee and student awareness** - set up education sessions for employees/students to share home/work trips to reduce their individual and collective carbon footprints.
8. **Support green vendors** - use vendors and suppliers who embrace green practices, i.e., buy local, purchase used office furniture, etc.
9. **Modernise your fleet** - update fleets with more environmentally friendly vehicles where applicable and consider switching to electric and hybrid vehicles.
10. **Promote environmentally friendly commuting** - establish carpool initiatives for employees. Provide mass transit passes for employees. Reward hybrid car owners with preferred parking.