

Slowly but surely, the world is starting to realise how important it is for everyone to play their part in protecting the environment. This includes how we run our businesses as well as what we do at home. For business owners looking at ways they can become more environmentally friendly, the task may seem daunting but there are many steps – both large and small – that can be achieved by pretty much everyone. From getting the basics like recycling right to utilising the best eco-technology, your business can be looking more eco-friendly in no time. Read on as we highlight a handful of ways you and your co-workers can move in the right direction.

USE ‘SCIENCE BASED TARGETS’

Green Element, an environmental management consultancy, offers a range of services to businesses large and small wanting to be greener. Speaking to us, the team at Green Element recommends utilising the initiative known as Science Based Targets:

“We recommend businesses set themselves **Science Based Targets**. The **Science Based Targets initiative** is a ‘collaboration between CDP, the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), World Resources Institute (WRI), and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) and one of the ‘We Mean Business Coalition commitments.’

“The initiative,” Green Element explains, “verifies targets and publishes them, helping to promote achieving goals and encourages others to follow suit. The Science Based Targets initiative provides tools and guidance to organisations wishing to reduce their environmental impact.”

From saving you money and future-proofing your business to improving your reputation and keeping up with regulations, this initiative, according to Green Element, is truly the way to go. Speaking to us about the first steps, they said:

“At Green Element we understand that you can’t reduce what you can’t measure. In order to sign up to Science Based Targets the first step is to calculate your businesses carbon footprint. Calculating your carbon footprint is an excellent first step, whether or not you are considering Science Based Targets.

“We have developed a tool called **Compare Your Footprint** that allows organisations to quickly calculate their carbon footprint and benchmark themselves against others in their industry. Our pricing structure varies depending on turnover, but we offer the application completely free to SMEs. This makes calculating a comprehensive carbon footprint a very cheap and easy step in the right direction.”

REVIEW YOUR OFFICE LAYOUT

For those who are really serious about making some environmentally friendly changes, now is a great time to take a look at your place of work and reviewing its layout. **Eco Design Consultants** is an architecture practise that is all about creating environmentally friendly places to live and work. Speaking to us about their suggestions, business development director Donna said:

“As business are moving their teams back into the office they will be reviewing layouts, space requirements and increased flexibility around working hours, so now is a great time to build in environmentally sustainable options and improve staff wellbeing while saving in the process. Our top tips for easy wins will be:

“1. Natural light has a beneficial effect on cardiac cycles which enhance the sense of wellbeing and can boost productivity while keeping your energy bills down. It needs to be controlled to avoid glare and overheating. So, you might need external shading to reduce summer heat gains. Lots of simple office layout techniques can help, from things like the obvious use of colour to placing filing cabinets opposite windows rather than next to them.

“2. Use large plants as dividers to give a sense of privacy and attenuate noise to help concentration. The use of plants in the office (biophilic design) has been extensively studied, even NASA has produced lists of plants that can help to cleanse the air.

“3. Always use second-hand furniture wherever possible, it will already have off-gasses so your office will be filled with fewer chemicals and your carbon footprint will be significantly reduced. There are a lot of specialists supplying decent second-hand furniture so it’s not a case of having a dozen different wonky desks anymore.

“4. If you’re looking to undertake renovation work or a new build, aim for the highest environmental standards you can, ideally to Passivhaus standard. Passivhaus is based in building physics applying all the principles will result in a comfortable year-round environment with a minimal impact on the environment. Even just applying some of the principles on a small extension or renovation will have a major impact.”

UNDERSTAND YOUR BUSINESS’ ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

We spoke to **Andrew Winston**, an expert, advisor, and widely read writer on sustainable business, who advises that a great way to get the ball rolling is to understand your business’ environmental impact, but also warns against reinventing the wheel:

“Go to your industry association, or big customers or suppliers, or look at competitor sustainability reports if they exist. See where they are focused.

“The first thing is really to understand your environmental impacts in the business and throughout the value chain. Some rough estimates of carbon emissions from operations and where the biggest emissions might be, either with suppliers or customers. For a company making products that use energy every day, the largest impact is likely to be how energy

efficient you make the product. But with steel or aluminium in products, there's also a supply chain footprint. The point is that it's rarely your own impacts that are the biggest."

RECYCLE AND USE RECYCLED ITEMS



Recycling is one of the most basic and obvious ways that you can make your business more environmentally friendly. However, this is something that many people overlook or only do half-heartedly. By having strict recycling practices and procedures in place around an office or workplace, you can make sure your business isn't being wasteful. Having the correct recycle bins available, clearly labelled and accessible, will also encourage employees to participate.

You can also look to use items and products around the office that are themselves recycled. Consider looking into sustainable suppliers in your industry, and also cut down on the amount of recycling you need to do by minimising printer use. And don't forget to recycle unwanted electronics too. The business website [Entrepreneur](#) says: "Unwanted devices often end up in landfills or are shipped to developing countries, where the emissions from shredding, burning and dismantling these products are damaging to human health and the environment."

So, try and find ways that to recycle these devices, look for e-waste recycling locations nearby, and resist the lazy urge to just bin those computers, tablets, and phones.

TAKE AN ECO-APPROACH TO ACCESSIBILITY

The desire and need to make businesses more accessible to those with limited mobility is becoming more and more prevalent. One of the best ways to do so is by ensuring that all levels of your office, company HQ, and workplace can be accessed without the use of stairs. This is where the choice to [install disabled lifts](#) comes in. But is there a way to

make this an environmentally friendly endeavour as well? It can certainly be done if you look in the right places. With the advent of **eco-silent lifts**, which are both **energy efficient** and quiet as a mouse, you can ensure your business is both accessible to all and doing its part for the environment.

PLANT TREES



Natural life such as trees and plants are paramount to the health and vitality of the environment. So, you may want to consider planting some on behalf of your business. You could look to make your business HQ a more picturesque and leafier environment by planting some trees on the premises or you could look to simply plant on behalf of the company in a designated conservation area with the **World Land Trust** or a local community wood. With The World Land Trust's 'Plant a Tree' scheme "you will contribute to global reforestation efforts, restoring lost forests, repairing damaged ecosystems and mitigating climate changes"

There are lots of options available and if your business is fortunate enough to have lots of land, the **Woodland Trust** has numerous ways they can assist you in your tree planting endeavours.

USE ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

A great way to do your company or business' part for the environment is to start utilising alternative forms of energy. Energy sources like solar, wind, and hydro are all possibilities

that would have a positive influence on the environment. Further still, this could also save you money on your energy bills! What's not to like?

EMBRACE REMOTE WORKING



A great way to transform your business into an eco-friendly operation is by fully embracing the remote working way of life. Now more than ever, businesses are realising that having staff work from home is a very viable option for them. Not only does it have benefits to the business, but with your workforce not driving each day to and from work, your business can have a substantial impact on the environment by cutting pollution. Your business doesn't have to go completely remote, of course, you could choose a day of the week to be 'work from home day', improving employee morale at the same time.

SEE ALSO: [How to make your home more eco-friendly](#)

HOW TO MAKE YOUR BUSINESS MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

- Use 'Science Based Targets'
- Review your office layout
- Understand your business' environmental impact

- Recycle and use recycled items
- Take an eco-approach to accessibility
- Plant trees
- Use alternative energy sources
- Embrace remote working

The desire to make your business eco-friendlier is a great one and something you should certainly pursue. The good news is that there are plenty of ways to make this happen and it has never been easier to be green than in the present day. So please consider some of the above and start bringing your business into closer harmony with the environment.

For more tips and advice, make sure to visit our [news page](#) and don't forget to check out our [eco-silent lifts](#).