

Sustainability Starts Small

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‘Sustainability’ When you say, what comes to mind? Do you think about planting two trees every time one gets cut down? About moving to renewable energy sources, or making products with longer lifespans?

But sustainability is about so much more than that, and now it’s talked about in a much wider context than it used to be. Now, sustainability isn’t just about being kind to the earth and making sure we don’t use up all of its natural resources. It’s about being good to everyone, and actively working against disadvantages. It brings in elements of equity and diversity in business practices, or accessibility and fairness. And it’s about adopting an ethical approach to sourcing your goods and services. Sustainability requires businesses to think beyond short-term profits and consider how their actions today will affect future generations. It means taking into account not only

environmental but also social and economic factors when making decisions. It means businesses need to be aware of their impact on society as well as on the environment and take steps towards reducing the negative elements of that impact. And if you think your business can't make a difference because you're too small, read on.

The Difference A Small Business Can Make

When we first started out as a business, the environment was the last thing on our minds. We were too concerned with building a client base and making sure the business brought enough money in the door to keep running! Similar to most businesses, cash flow was top of the priority list. But as we grew, we understood that the way we did business had an impact, and if we could reduce that, why wouldn't we? It started small, opting into schemes like Too Good To Go, switching to buying coffee in recycled cups and signing up to causes like Mossy Earth and Ecologi.

After a while, we moved the business into a converted garden room with large windows, which meant we didn't need to have the lights on much. Later we installed solar panels so that the office could mostly be powered by 100% renewable energy. We switched our cars for electric ones, and started assessing our supplier's environmental efforts, and gained a few accreditations of our own. Now, we're looking into bCorp, providing carbon-neutral hosting and accessible websites, and always making new small changes to reduce our impact on the planet.

Small Doesn't Mean It's Not Worth Doing

As business owners, we have an opportunity to make a positive impact on the environment by being mindful of our digital

activity. By understanding how our digital activity contributes to our carbon footprint, we can make those small changes that will help reduce emissions and reduce our environmental impact. There are a lot of ways you can start the green journey in your business. You could look at how you use cloud software and websites for marketing purposes and make the switch to eco-friendly hosting services where you can. Believe it or not, there are plenty of providers who can host your website and all of your data for you in a carbon-neutral data centre powered by renewable energy. At HDS we prefer using a company called 20i, but there are many others out there you could choose from. You could look into using renewable energy sources when powering your computers or home offices. Solar panels are the most common choice, but heat pumps are also a great option for reducing your energy consumption in commercial premises, or simply assessing the way you use the equipment in your office to see if you could save power.

Going green is definitely a marathon, not a sprint. But even the smallest changes within a one-person business can make a big difference and can help us not only save money but save the planet too.



The Impact Of Websites On The Environment

We mentioned web hosting earlier, and this is one of the key things a business of any size can do to dramatically reduce its carbon footprint. And it doesn't have to cost the earth to do it. Every business needs a website, right? It's your digital shop window, showing off what you have to offer to the wide world.

And because websites are digital things, we don't tend to think about them as having a carbon footprint as such. But think of it this way. Your website still has to physically live somewhere. The internet doesn't actually live in the clouds (despite what marketers will make you think), it lives on servers and data centres consume an enormous amount of energy on a daily basis. A typical data centre will be home to around 50,000 servers, and to keep it all running the data centre uses as much electricity as a small town of 50,000 people. This translates into a significant amount of carbon emissions from burning fossil fuels to generate electricity, and to power their cooling systems, since data centres produce a lot of heat. By 2030, it's estimated that data centres will consume 13% of all global electricity, and produce 3.2% of global greenhouse gas emissions. So, choosing a place to host your website that is dedicated to minimizing that impact can make a huge difference to your carbon footprint, and the environment as a whole! So the next time you think your business can't do anything to be more sustainable, think again! Even the smallest change you make can have a big impact, and all of those small things add up quickly! Whether you switch suppliers or just make sure you compost your food waste at work, your action makes all the difference.

To find out more [book a discovery call](#) today.