

Going green with records storage good for business

Springtime gets everyone in a "green mode." It's a great time to look for simple, cost-effective ways to "go green," Being eco-friendly is particularly important in today's world of business. But, being earth-friendly isn't always cost-friendly.

Information management is one area where every business, no matter the size, location or industry can add a little "green." The best part is that it's not only cost-effective, it could save your business money in the long run.

While some companies have implemented thorough records management programs, most businesses think what they're currently doing is fine.

More often than not, businesses have countless filing cabinets often scattered among several rooms. Owners don't know what types of information are being stored or even if the information needs to be kept any more.

Not only is this wasting precious office space, it's also putting the business at risk during an audit or court case.

And if you don't know what is being stored, there's a good chance someone could steal the information and you'd never know. Staff also ends up wasting time while searching for or recreating misplaced files.

To add to your green credentials and improve your overall business, consider the following:

- Put an end to printing everything. Most businesses print and save everything, which isn't cost-friendly or eco-friendly. Cut back on ink, paper, storage space and equipment maintenance costs by converting all files, no matter the original format, into a digital file.

All electronic files can then be housed on a secure, online content management system which acts as the new virtual file room. With a click of a mouse you can view all your files that were once packed haphazardly in a back file room.

With this type of document management solution, you're doing your part in helping to keep our air clean, reducing the number of trees being cut down and preserving gallons of water. Plus, your staff can spend their time on revenue-generating tasks rather than looking for information.

- Shred and recycle paper waste. All too often, boxes full of confidential information end up taking valuable landfill space.

Not only is this bad for the environment, it's a security risk for your business. Make a positive change by shredding all paper waste. While a small office shredder may work for some businesses, most businesses will need to



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seek out a business that specializes in secure shredding. Find a business that will not only shred your information but that will also recycle the paper waste. You'll be surprised how big of an environmental impact your business will contribute by recycling paper waste.

- Properly destroy media / hard drives and recycle them. You know paper waste should be shredded and recycled, but what do you do with different forms of media containing sensitive information.

These unneeded items can and should be recycled as well. Information on CDs, microfilm, cassette tapes, floppy discs, blueprints, x-rays, etc. should be properly destroyed.

Don't forget about information stored on hard drives as well. Deleting files and sending them to the recycling bin doesn't entirely get rid of the information from the hard drive.

Look for a business that can properly destroy all files, regardless of how they are stored, including hard drives.

Make sure this company will also recycle any leftover waste. You'll feel good knowing you're not only being kind to the environment, but your information is also safe from falling into the wrong hands.

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■ If you would like to write a guest column focusing on technology, please contact Larry Desch at LDesch@thebusinessnews.com.