

10 Low to No-Cost Sustainable Practices You Can Implement Today

Going green is easy and can save you money by reducing electricity, water and trash bills. Try these tried-and-true tip at your tourism business.

1. Create a Green Team/Empower Your Employees.

One of the most important first steps in adopting sustainable practices is creating a team with organizational-wide representation and encouraging your employees to provide leadership in moving towards sustainability. For information on how to develop a green team visit www.p2pays.org/hospitality/main/index.htm.

2. Turn Off the Juice When Not in Use.

An easy way to reduce your organization's environmental impact while reducing your utility bills is by turning off lights and electronics when not in use. One of the most effective ways of doing this is by assigning an individual the responsible for this task but all employees should be involved. Many electrical devices continue to use energy even when turned off so it can be helpful putting office equipment on power strips so that all unused electronics (e.g. printers, computer monitors, televisions, and DVD players) can be turned off at one source. Turning down the heating and cooling systems when no one is in the building is also helpful.

3. LED Exit

Exit signs might not seem like an important part of energy efficiency, but because they operate 24/7, they can have substantial electricity usage. Many new energy efficient technology options exist for exit signs, including retrofit kits and photoluminescent. Not only do more efficient exit signs have lower electricity usage but many require less maintenance as well.

4. Contact Your Local Waste Reduction Resource.

The staff at the North Carolina Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance has put together a database of local waste reduction contacts. Your local contact can be the first step in developing a successful recycling program. The database is found at www.p2pays.org/localgov/PAYT/ncwaste.asp; for more information on recycling visit www.p2pays.org/ref/01/00420.pdf.

5. Use to Reuse.

One of the best ways to reduce waste is at the source. Finding ways to reuse materials or to implement reusable alternatives can go a long way in reducing waste while reducing costs. Consider reusing the non-printed side of used paper as scrap paper or eliminating the use of single-use plastic water bottles. Although there might be an initial cost associated with using reusable materials, in many situations you quickly recoup the costs and save your organization money and resources.



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6. Go Local and Make Partnerships.

Drawing upon local food and area experiences are quickly becoming one of the hottest topics in tourism. Furthermore, by using local vendors and suppliers you help support your neighborhoods and keep tourism dollars within the region. Although local suppliers might not be able to satisfy all of your organization's needs,

7. Use Post-Consumer Recycled Paper.

Post-consumer recycled paper is made of products that have already served their initial purpose. In today's market, many cost competitive alternatives to virgin paper exist. If your organization chooses to use post-consumer recycled paper, it is important to state how much recycled content was used in publications (e.g. 35% post consumer content). For more information about recycled paper visit www.p2pays.org/ref/03/02243.pdf.

8. Use Energy Efficient Lighting.

One easy energy efficient lighting technology is using the sunlight to light rooms. This can be as simple as opening drapes and blinds to light a room. Other technologies include compact florescent light bulbs and LED lights. It is essential though to review what options are the most appropriate for your situation before making any investment because not all lighting technologies are appropriate for all situations. One successful method of switching to an energy efficient lighting system is to install the system phases, replicating successful strategies to other areas once completed and tested in others. For more information on conducting your own energy lighting audit www.p2pays.org/ref/26/25979.pdf.

9. Install Aerators in Sinks.

Although most of the state is no longer under drought conditions, water conservation will continue to be of vital importance to North Carolina. Aerators are low cost, simple to install devices that reduce the volume of water used while maintaining the sinks effectiveness for washing. For more information on water conservation visit <http://savewaternc.org/BusHome.asp> and www.epa.gov/watersense.

10. Have a Formal Commitment to Being Sustainable.

Many organizations are afraid of making a formal commitment to being sustainable until they have reached some standard or level of green. Although it is important not to mislead your customers and partners, it is also important to understand that being sustainable is not a destination but rather a process. The most honest statement regarding sustainability a business can make is that it is more socially and environmentally responsible today than it was yesterday and will be even more so tomorrow. By making an official statement of commitment to sustainability you hold your organization to that standard.



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