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Article

Getting Started: Simple Ways to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint

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Please note this content was curated for SME businesses in the UK

In a time where environmental consciousness is prevalent, small businesses are discovering the impact they could make by reducing their business's carbon footprint.

This guide shares some practical steps from experts tailored for small businesses to work towards effectively decreasing their carbon footprint. From sustainable operational practices to informed decision-making, these approaches offer some possible pathways to contribute to a more eco-friendly world, while also possibly benefiting your business's bottom line.

Whether your business is just starting or has established roots, embracing these insights could help you drive positive change.

Why reducing your carbon footprint is important

Adapting to industry changes: irrespective of your business's scale, synchronising your carbon footprint reduction efforts with industry trends could help you stay relevant and forward-thinking.

Cost benefits: minimising energy consumption and optimising resource use not only conserves the environment- it could also reduce operational costs. It is estimated that small businesses can save between 18%-25% on average by implementing energy efficiency measures **(1)**.

Employee engagement: a commitment to sustainability could boost your employee morale and engagement. Staff members often take pride in working for responsible organisations, leading to increased job satisfaction and retention. 1 in 5 say they will not work for a business that does not align with her values around sustainability, and this figure jumps to 1 in 3 for those under the age of 25, meaning it will be of increasing importance to those entering the workforce in the coming years **(2)**.

8 simple, yet impactful, approaches to lowering your carbon footprint

The eight suggestions below are steps you could take when trying to lower your carbon footprint.

Efficient energy practices: implement easy measures such as turning off lights and devices when not in use, and utilising energy-efficient appliances to lower energy consumption. Upgrade your office environment with energy-efficient lighting, temperature control systems, and well-insulated spaces to conserve energy and create a comfortable workspace.

Learn more about what you could do in this **SME Guide to Energy Efficiency (3)**.

Resource management: make thoughtful choices about resource utilisation, from reducing paper usage to conserving water.

Get started with this **guide** on Practical ways to reducing your business waste **(4).**

Mindful travel: prioritise virtual meetings where possible to cut down on travel emissions. When travel is essential, consider eco-friendly transportation options such as walking, biking, or public transport.

Supply chain enhancement: collaborate with suppliers who share your commitment to eco-conscious practices, positively impacting your overall environmental footprint.

Learn more about ethical supply chains in our article **Your guide to sustainable and ethical sourcing (5)**.

Waste reduction strategies: minimise waste by embracing smart practices like recycling and composting. Implement efficient waste management systems that reduce landfill contributions.

Digital transformation: embrace technology to minimise paper usage and streamline operations, reducing both resource consumption and your carbon footprint.

Employee engagement: educate and involve your team in your sustainability efforts. Empower them to contribute ideas, adopt eco-friendly practices, and foster a culture of responsibility towards the environment.

Remember, each of these steps has the potential to contribute to a cumulative impact. By weaving these practices into your business operations, each small eco-conscious step could accumulate into a bigger stride forward for your business and the environment.

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1 A guide to energy efficiency and cost savings in your workplace: https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/business/business-support-and-advice/guide-energy-efficiency-and-cost-savings-your-workplace
2 Rise of the climate quitters: 1 in 5 UK workers would turn down a job if a company's ESG credentials were found to be poor: https://www.zerocarbonacademy.com/posts/rise-of-the-climate-quitters-1-in-5-uk-workers-would-turn-down-a-job-if-a-company-s-esg-credentials-were-found-to-be-poor
3 SME Guide to Energy Efficiency: https://www.seai.ie/publications/SME-Guide-to-Energy-Efficiency.pdf
4 Why better waste management is better business: https://prod.dxp.beazley.com/en-US/esg-centre/articles/why-better-waste-management-is-better-business-en/
5 Your guide to sustainable and ethical sourcing: Your guide to sustainable and ethical sourcing

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