

### Making your small business more energy efficient

In this current economic climate, it is important that every penny is made to count. Energy consumption is one of the largest costs suffered by businesses throughout the world, and, if not managed properly, can easily hinder a company's profits.

If a company takes just a few moments to step back, assess its energy habits, and make a few key changes in the workplace, the effects can be startling. As well as preserving the planet's energy reserves and long term future, knowing how to handle energy will ensure that your business is not spending more than it should be.

#### Why should your business become more energy efficient?

- Cutting costs – less energy consumption means that your business will be spending less money.
- Improve your company image – the UK has become far more mindful of the impact that small businesses have on the environment. By demonstrating that you have taken environmental issues seriously, it is far more likely that your business will be seen as modern and trustworthy. New and existing customers will engage with this.
- Other financial incentives – all businesses that use more than a 'domestic' level of energy must pay a Climate Change Levy. By reducing the amount of energy that your business uses, you could end up paying a significantly lower amount of tax.

#### What changes can your business make to improve its energy efficiency?

- **Replace all light bulbs with energy saving bulbs** – this may seem like an obvious suggestion, but it can make a real difference in the long term. People often fear that energy saving light bulbs fail to provide the same levels of lighting as normal bulbs, but this is generally not the case.
- **Turn off computer equipment and lights where possible** – computers are a heavy drain on resources and should be turned off when not in use for large periods of time. Company managers should ensure that their staff members are careful not to leave any non-essential computer equipment and lights switched on overnight.
- **Consider the position of employee workstations** – by considering how your employees are positioned in the office, you can ensure that you are making the most of natural light. Not only will you save money on your electricity bills, but your employees may appreciate the natural brightness!



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- **Turn off radiators that are in unused positions** – many offices have areas that, for whatever reason, are left unoccupied for long periods of time. Heating bills contribute massively to a company's overall energy consumption, so turning radiators off in areas like these, or at least turning them down, will have a real impact.
- **Set your hot water supply to 60°C, and no more** – setting your hot water supplies to 60°C is necessary to protect against legionnaires' disease. However, it does not have to be set any higher than this. Simply reducing this temperature from 61°C to 60°C can have a major effect on your bills.

### Energy saving action points

- **Conduct a 'walk-round survey'** – while this guide provides you with some of the main ways of becoming more energy efficient, it cannot cater for all of the issues specific to your business. A 'walk-round survey' will help you to determine further areas where you might be able to reduce your energy usage. The Carbon Trust offers some useful guidance on how best to conduct this check.
- **Assign responsibility for energy matters to an employee** – by making someone accountable for energy efficiency, it is far more likely that changes will be pushed through. As long as the person appointed is adequately qualified and is given the necessary support, it is likely that you will see your energy consumption reduced as a result.
- **Raise staff awareness of energy saving methods** – by keeping your staff well-informed of the benefits of energy saving, and of the steps that can be taken to implement certain changes, you will take a huge step towards cutting your energy costs. Posters, newsletter updates and intranet posts can all be effective ways of raising awareness of certain energy issues.

Remember, it's often the small changes that make a big difference. So, whether you are turning off a few more computer screens or reducing the temperature of an entire heating system, think how your business can become that bit more energy efficient and save some money in the process.



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