



How Going Green Can Help Your Business

A Guide for SME Retailers

This guide presents actions proven to benefit your company and the environment.

Why Go Green?

Going green can benefit your company in at least four ways:

- **Cut costs.** Energy efficiency and waste reduction mean savings. Simply replacing regular light bulbs with alternatives [can reduce lighting energy costs](#) by 75%.
- **Increase revenues.** Green products let you build your customer base and even charge higher prices. Customers will [pay up to 10% more](#) for products that are green (e.g. organic, fair trade or made from recycled content).
- **Find and keep great employees.** Companies with a better environmental record have [more committed, motivated](#) employees.
- **Build community goodwill.** Environmental initiatives outside the store, like landscaping or donating to community projects, can broaden support for your company. [Sales increase by \\$6](#) on average for each dollar donated.

Environmental Actions that Will Help Your Company

- **Quick wins** are easy to accomplish and don't require a lot of expertise or effort.
- **Deep changes** take more effort, but can have greater payoff.

Action Area	Quick Wins	Deep Changes
Lighting	<p>Turn off lights when not needed. How: Posters to remind employees (BC Hydro).</p>	<p>Use more efficient lights: CFLs and LEDs rather than incandescent bulbs, and T8 rather than T12 lamps.</p> <p>More efficient lights save up to 75% of lighting energy use. Use the small business energy calculator (IESO) for exact savings.</p> <p>Incentives and rebates are available. Check with your energy supplier and the energy funding database (Natural Resources Canada).</p>
Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC)	<p>Adjust the temperature, manually or with a programmable thermostat. Each degree adjustment reduces your HVAC energy bill by 5.4% on average. Calculate exact savings with the small business energy calculator (IESO).</p> <p>Maintain HVAC system. Simple maintenance reduces your HVAC energy bill by 15-20%. How: Checklist for simple maintenance (US government).</p>	<p>Upgrade your HVAC system. Payback is 1-6 years, depending on the action (Details). Incentives and rebates are available. Check with your energy supplier and the energy funding database (Natural Resources Canada). You can also involve an energy services company (ESCO), which makes changes at no cost to you.</p>

Action Area	Quick Wins	Deep Changes
Equipment	Activate computer energy saver settings. Save about \$50 per computer annually by activating energy saver settings. How to activate settings (US government).	Buy Energy Star (energy efficient) equipment. Energy Star options exist for computers, commercial appliances, food service equipment, building products, electronics and lighting. Products are listed online . Incentives and rebates are available (Natural Resources Canada).
Waste	Recycling is often less expensive than paying disposal costs.	Reduce and reuse materials. Set your priorities based on what kind of waste your company produces. Advice on recycling (Industry Canada)
Community	Donate to community efforts, especially if they are connected to your business. Sales increase by \$6 on average for each dollar donated.	Tell neighbours about changes that might affect them; for example, different delivery times. Early notice reduces conflict.
Environmental products and services		Offer “green” items to expand your market or get higher prices. Retail customers will pay up to 10% more for products and services that are “green”: e.g. energy-efficient, fair trade, or made from recycled content.

Your Environmental Strategy

Get started. There’s not one right place to start. You and your employees know your company best. Try actions that seem like the best fit for your company, see how they’re working, and make necessary changes.

Find Help. Great resources are available. Use your network: employees, customers and trade associations can all offer insight. Your energy supplier may provide advice and even funding for energy actions. For a comprehensive guide, see Industry Canada’s [SME Sustainability Roadmap](#).

Consider an “audit.” An “[energy audit](#)” or “[waste audit](#)” systematically evaluates your opportunities to save resources and money. You can hire an outside consultant or [do this yourself](#); check with your energy supplier for help.

Share success. Publicize what you’ve done by describing it on your website, in a staff meeting or with customers. Greater awareness enhances the benefits.

Quick Resources

- Industry Canada’s [SME Sustainability Roadmap](#) provides step-by-step guidance to environmental actions.
- The [IESO Small Business Tool](#) calculates your specific energy costs and potential savings.
- [Bloom Centre Case Studies](#) show what other companies have done, and the resulting savings.
- NBS’s [SME Primer](#) has tips on environmental and social actions.
- Natural Resources Canada’s [Directory of Energy Efficiency Programs](#) shows subsidies offered by municipal, provincial and federal governments.

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