

SECTION I WHY INNOVATIONS IS SUCH A HUGE TOPIC TODAY

THE GREEN OFFICE

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Greener homes are in the spotlight these days, but what about the other places where many of us spend huge chunks of our time--our offices? Some simple changes of habit can save energy and resources at work, and these small steps can be multiplied by persuading the powers-that-be at your workplace to adopt environmentally friendly (and often cost-effective) policies.

Many people don't realize that operating office equipment can cost much more than the equipment costs them in the first place. For example, a photocopier that costs you \$4,000 to buy, that is left on continuously for seven years over its two-million copies life, may consume \$1,500 of electricity, \$24,000 of paper and \$15,000 of toner. The greenhouse gas emissions from supplying energy from power stations and manufacturing and disposing of the paper you use could exceed 80 tonnes of carbon dioxide, which is equivalent to more than the total greenhouse gas emissions of a typical Australian home over that seven-year period.

Increasingly, leading edge organizations are considering operating costs as well as environmental impacts when they buy their office equipment. For example, they understand that if you buy an energy-efficient photocopier designed to work well with recycled paper and refilled toner cartridges, copy double-sided whenever you can, set up an effective paper recycling system, and set the photocopier to powersave when you're not using it, over its seven-year life you may: reduce the electricity you use by up to 80%; save up to 80% on your electricity bill; halve your paper and toner bills; reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electricity, paper and toner by 75%; leave 50 trees in the ground which would otherwise have been chopped down to make paper; involve your staff in doing something for the environment; increase productivity through improved staff morale; enhance your company's profits.

Paper reduction and recycling schemes can reduce the costs and environmental impacts of paper use by 75–95%. To achieve such spectacular savings, effective staff training and feedback on performance are essential. A greener workplace can mean a lighter ecological footprint, a healthier and more productive place to work, and good news for the bottom line.