



Greening Your Training

As organizations make environmental sustainability part of their corporate strategy, look at the impact of training and development on reaching this goal. Every aspect of the organization plays a role in reducing the company's carbon footprint, but let's focus on what you can do as a trainer to help out. Going green not only improves the environment, but also results in cost savings for the organization – so everyone wins!

Reduce travel. This can be done a variety of ways:

- **When possible, offer sessions to larger groups.** Rather than offer the same session five times to five people, think about whether it can be offered twice to a dozen of attendees. Of course, the type and content of the training will dictate if this is an effective choice, but you want to decrease the amount of energy and resources you use each time you run the session.
- **Look for facilities that are accessible from public transportation.** Rather than offer training in a remote location where attendees must drive, offer the training where there is plenty of public transportation opportunities; this should encourage people to leave their cars at home.
- **Use virtual or e-learning methods.** Again, given that the content is appropriate, offer the information in an electronic format to reduce the use of resources required to run a classroom session.

Use green tools.

- **Install energy saving light bulbs and motion detectors in training rooms.** Energy saving bulbs cost less to run and the motion detectors only go on when needed, making them cost effective as well.
- **Substitute traditional printing methods with soy based ink on mixed sources paper.** Inks made of organic materials are better for the environment and using paper from well managed forests promote sustainability.

Make paper a commodity.

- **Use online job aids, if possible.** Print only what you need to, and when you must, print on both sides of the paper. Then, recycle what you no longer need.
- **During the training session, opt for washable mugs instead of foam or cardboard cups.** It takes less energy and resources to wash a dozen mugs than to buy and dispose of throwaways that pollute the earth.

Buy lunch locally.

- **Request that food comes from local farms and businesses.** It is fresher so it tastes better, travels less distance, and helps the local economy.

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Practice the three Rs:

- Reduce, reuse and recycle during all parts of the training design, development and delivery processes.

While there may be a trade off between initial up-front costs for new equipment and eco-friendly products, the payoff down the road is certainly worthwhile. It is very important for you as a training professional to remember that the most successful greening strategies are those that produce both organizational and environmental benefits. Do your share, to help the environment!

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