



TAKING YOUR BUSINESS PRACTICES BEYOND THE RECYCLING BIN

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In the pantheon of buzzwords, “green” must surely occupy a rarified piece of ground. It seems to slip into nearly every conversation, every other page of the newspaper and every third minute of the evening news. While large companies are taking well-publicized steps to both literally and figuratively clean up their acts, many owners and managers of small and medium sized businesses remain baffled as to the depth of their responsibility to initiate eco-friendly practices. The problem is definitely not one of indifference. Many of the business people I speak to tell me that they’d like to do more but just aren’t sure where to get started.

Like most important business initiatives, it’s probably best to take a phased approach to implementation. One of the most efficient, manageable – and perhaps affordable – ways to begin the process is to choose vendors based on their commitment to green practices.

Practices In Place

The really good news is that many businesses are already buying services and products from environmentally progressive suppliers.

I’m quite sure that not all of the clients of Elements — my graphic design and marketing communications firm — know the full extent of our eco-friendly practices.

Sure, we try to take every available opportunity to inform, but amidst the usual hustle and bustle and projects that needed to be done yesterday (that we’ll learn about tomorrow), something inevitably gives. The bottom line is: the simple act of asking the question “What are you doing to be green?” might be an important and positive step toward being a more verdant business.

And – in any case – businesses can only be asked the question so many times before realizing that doing nothing is no longer an option. That is to say, let them know it is important to you and without a doubt it will become important to them.

While each business must ultimately take responsibility to minimize its ecological impact, it is perfectly reasonable to expect some assistance from vendors in making the right choices. For example – as a supplier of graphic design services – my firm keeps close watch on the latest developments in recycled papers, soy-based inks and other leading-edge advancements on behalf of our clients.

None of this is to say that any business can or should completely pass along its environmental obligations to its vendors. Somewhere along the line, most organizations will need to carefully parse every aspect of what they do to determine if an eco-friendly alternative is available.

Until that time arrives, using vendors already committed to eco-friendly practices may provide the easiest way to take those first, important steps down the path to a greener future.