

## TheGreenPage

By Sergio J. Sideman

## The Art of Green Business

**D**espite what Kermit the Frog says, it is easy being green, especially if you live in Southern California. Individuals and businesses around the globe are taking the steps necessary to make the workplace environmentally sustainable and it's getting easier all the time.

Having a green business means being aware of the many green alternatives available. It also means maintaining your plans after you've made them and continuing to add new and better alternatives as time goes on.



**“As businesses become more tech savvy, many are opting for e-signatures.”**

There is no barrier to entry to going green. My green business tip list is not cost prohibitive. It can be implemented by any business. We have incorporated all of these green ideas into our real estate information technology business and are enjoying the cost savings as well as many intangible benefits.

- Recycle. You can easily obtain a large recycling bin for your office free of charge from [www.bottlesandcans.com](http://www.bottlesandcans.com). You'd be surprised at the items in your office that are recyclable—everything from paper to printing cartridges. It's also important to buy recycled office products and use recycled paper, even on business cards.

- Use hybrid vehicles for company cars. Aside from the electric/gas, there are many other hybrid alternatives that are already available, including flex fuel (gas/ethanol), hydrogen and natural gas. Our entire fleet of company cars are hybrids. We paid a few extra dollars up front, but the gas savings and PR benefits have more than made up for it. Keep an eye out, too, for new inventions, since this is a rapidly growing industry. France is set to debut an Air Car in late 2008 that actually runs on compressed air!

- Encourage employees to work from home. Telecommuting keeps cars off the road, reduces pollution, increases workers' productivity and helps preserve their sanity if they have long commutes.

- Ditch the plastic. Use ceramic mugs, glasses and dishes, rather than plastic, in the office kitchen. This will greatly reduce unnecessary waste.

- Support green businesses. Use the National Green

Pages website, [www.coopamerica.org/pubs/greenpages](http://www.coopamerica.org/pubs/greenpages), to find service providers who have been screened for green business practices. For eco-friendly products and services, go to [www.lowimpactliving.com](http://www.lowimpactliving.com).

- Use energy-saving light bulbs. They last much longer than standard light bulbs and will save you money in the long run.

- Buy a TerraPass to offset the carbon emissions of your company vehicles. When you purchase a TerraPass, the company uses your money to support programs and companies that are working toward environmental sustainability. These are also available to purchase for air travel. We bought TerraPasses for our entire fleet; it only costs \$29 per year, per car to offset their carbon footprint.

- Use motion sensor lights. These prevent unnecessary energy waste when employees forget to turn off the lights when they leave the office.

- If possible, open the windows. Chlorofluorocarbons emitted by air conditioners play a large role in the depletion of the ozone layer, which leads to global warming.

- Instead of snail-mailing paperwork, e-mail it. This saves paper waste and can speed up business transactions. Some aspects of business may still require paper, but many offices are using e-mail for quick approvals and correspondence, while saving the final legal signatures and business closings for the paper documents. As businesses become more tech savvy, many are opting for e-signatures, which are just as legal as an actual signed paper document.

- Schedule a “Green Event” to kick off the green efforts in your office. It will help everyone get behind the idea and can serve as a team-building experience. These events can also be great for the family, and help the next generation become involved in sustaining our environment.

- Purchase the “Green Book.” It is filled with inventive ideas and alternatives to make your home and work more environmentally friendly. You can learn more about this at [www.readthegreenbook.com](http://www.readthegreenbook.com).

There's no better time to get involved in the green movement than right now. It's easy and affordable and there are an innumerable amount of resources to help you. —SOCAL

*The views expressed in this article are those of the author and not Real Estate Media or its publications.*

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