

Case Study: Education and Outreach Campaign Reduces Paper Usage

Two separate departments within the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Chicago office reduced the amount of paper purchased by 28 percent through an education and outreach campaign. This exceeded their original goal of a 5 percent reduction and showed that with good education and outreach, office paper usage can be decreased.

After starting to experience great success in their project to reduce internal air travel, two groups within OPM, the Nationwide Testing

Group⁽¹⁾ and the Oversight Group, began a second campaign to buy less paper by using less paper. This was only the second time these groups had worked on a green project, but their success in the Federal Green Challenge air travel reduction campaign was an indication they would be successful in collaborating again to meet project goals.

OPM initiated a "Think Before You Print" campaign with an eye-catching logo on small flyers that reminded employees to save paper. The flyers, laminated and placed on everyone's desk, helped employees think about printer usage.

OPM's newly established office green team asked staff to set default printer preferences to double-sided printing.



The Office of Personnel Management Nationwide Testing and Oversight Groups are located in the John C. Kluczynski Federal Building in Chicago.

Key Topics

- Paper use reduction.
- Double-sided printing.

Results

- 28 percent reduction in paper purchased in one year.
- Reduced paper demand avoided the emissions of 22,000 pounds of CO₂ equivalent⁽²⁾
- Establishment of a green team.

Facility at a Glance

- Located in the Chicago Federal Center in the city's central business district.
- Two groups shared the office, Nationwide Testing and Oversight.
- 30 employees between the two groups.
- Participant since 2011 in the FGC transportation and purchasing categories.
- Recipient of two EPA Region 5 FGC Awards: Transportation and Purchasing.

Sustainable Materials Management

Federal Green Challenge



CHANGING HOW WE THINK ABOUT OUR RESOURCES FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

Paper Use Reduced

They also provided computer screenshots to show how to do it. To encourage staff to make the printer setting change, the green team organized a competition to see which group could get the most staff to make the changes. Monthly, they emailed results on how many people had switched to double-sided printing. At the end of the competition both groups had made such great progress in reducing paper use that it was a tie.

However, some employees have individual printers that are not double-sided capable, so some additional strategizing was needed. The team asked employees to use individual printers to print only one-page, single-sided documents. Employees agreed that all double-sided documents would be printed on network printers capable of double-sided printing.

Accurately tracking paper-purchase reduction was a challenge because two administrative assistants did the purchasing, and neither person tracked how much they bought. To solve this issue, OPM tasked one individual with tracking the number of reams of paper used each month in the entire office.

This task itself proved challenging because employees who have personal printers tended to take more than one ream of paper at a time from storage to use in that personal printer. This practice skewed the tracking results since paper usage was counted in the month the reams were taken from storage, not the month they were actually used.

At the start of the initiative, employees were asked to take only one ream at a time from storage, so OPM could better track monthly paper usage. With cooperation from the whole office, the paper usage tracking system was implemented successfully and the office was able to significantly exceed its FGC goals.

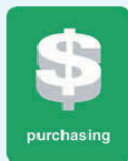
Overall, the project was also successful because of the green team's ability to work together toward a common goal and adopt new techniques. They had only worked before on one project, so the effort to continue to join forces on this project was itself an accomplishment.

- (1) Nationwide Testing Group closed in early 2014.
- (2) Environmental impact estimates were made using the Environmental Paper Network Paper Calculator Version 3.2. For more information visit www.papercalculator.org.

About the Federal Green Challenge

The Federal Green Challenge, part of EPA's Sustainable Materials Management Program, is designed to challenge federal agencies throughout the country to lead by example in reducing the federal government's environmental impact. It helps agencies meet obligations under Executive Orders 13514 and 13423.

In 2012, nearly 300 federal agencies, representing more than 500,000 employees participated in the Federal Green Challenge. Their combined efforts resulted in an estimated cost savings of more than \$31 million to U.S. taxpayers.



For More Information

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