

How to Go Green: Raise staff awareness

Want staff to participate in going green but not sure where to start? Here are some tips to engage staff in resource efficiency and increase their awareness of environmental practices within the workplace.

Overview

Potential quick-wins

Staff behavioural changes are the first step to reduce resource consumption. Many simple ways to reduce the environmental impacts of your business – such as switching off monitors and printing double-sided documents– rely on the awareness and support of your staff. Awareness campaigns and other tools can help you change practices across your business.

Corporate culture

Programmes that encourage and award green habits among staff can also create a positive change in corporate culture. This can improve your business image, attract talented people, and generate the momentum to make your business a leader in sustainable practices. Engaging staff is key to the success of an environmental management system.

Considerations

Costs and savings

- Costs are minima and just include materials such as promotional posters or awards.
- The financial savings can be great with an average of 10% energy savings to be expected from a “Switch off” Campaign. Staff-based green procedures can reduce utility bills and procurement costs.

Senior management support

- Visible support from senior management is critical to ensure measures are taken seriously. You may also require senior approval for some policy changes.

Time

- Raising awareness among staff and changing behaviours across the business can take time and planning. A sustained effort might be necessary.

Methods and actions

Awareness campaigns

- A structured awareness campaign, from planning to action and then review, can be an effective tool.
- Identify areas of waste where you can improve, for example switching off unnecessary lighting. Then identify your target audience: where in the business do you need to raise awareness of the new practice?
- To avoid the process being too daunting, focus on no more than one or two changes at the time.
- Decide on your message content. Consider providing information on climate change, but keep it simple. Sharing information with staff on just how

much your business spends on energy can be effective. Grab attention with a thought-provoking statement, or use a catchy slogan!

- There are many ways to motivate your colleagues to participate. For example, productivity increases, company targets, improved comfort, competitions, or awards. You should choose a theme that suits your target audience; staff and management may be motivated by different factors.
- Finally, use effective ways to communicate your message. Ideas include for example emails, stickers and walk rounds. See the table at the end of this factsheet.

- Start your campaign at an appropriate time: for example, the autumn is a good time to bring up heating. Avoid holiday periods.
- Remember to inform new employees of the campaign, ideally by including it in their formal induction.
- Conduct staff surveys to find out how aware they are of sustainability issues in the business, before and after your campaign. Feedback can make staff feel more involved.
- Continue to monitor your progress towards your targets: have your practices and environmental impacts changed?
- Monitoring will also help you decide an appropriate time to stop. You must ensure that the campaign remains fresh and relevant.

Green Champions

- Consider appointing one or several Green Champions, who can coordinate your efforts to raise staff awareness about environmental issues.
- The Green Champion could simply set a good example by switching off lights and monitors, or put information stickers on fridges and printers.
- This can often work well on a voluntary, informal basis. You could encourage several employees to sign up, by providing information through 'road show' meetings, websites, support packs, or conferences.
- However, if you aim to implement wider environmental initiatives, a single Green Champion can act as an official central contact for resources, actions and targets. They could coordinate training or appoint responsibilities to other staff.

- In this case, your Green Champion could take the initiative by collecting data on for example energy use and costs, in order to identify areas of potential savings.
- Whatever the exact job description, one of their most important tasks is to motivate and convince other employees. This could involve passing on information to staff and collecting feedback from them regularly.
- The person/s you appoint must be credible and enthusiastic about environmental issues. Communication skills and problem solving abilities are also important. Ideally he or she should be familiar with staff, as well as with processes and technical or quality issues.

Environmental teams

- Consider creating a team to support the Green Champion, with representatives from management and operations.
- This lets employees engage in the process, and can ensure that environmental efforts become part of your corporate culture.
- If team members come from different parts of your business you can bring a diversity of ideas and perspectives to your cause.
- Each team member could be responsible for an environmental issue (such as heating, waste or travel) or for a particular business division.

Further information

- The information on awareness campaigns in this factsheet, and additional support and ideas, can be found in the Carbon Trust's publication: www.carbontrust.co.uk/publications/publicationdetail?productid=CTG001.
- EnviroWise offers free advice on Green Champion programmes: www.envirowise.co.uk.

Communication Routes	
Emails	A direct form of communication, but avoid overload.
Presentations and/or training	A dedicated presentation or longer-term training on energy saving is an ideal opportunity for getting a detailed message across.
Posters	These remind people to save energy but they must be renewed at regular intervals.
Staff newsletters	Use staff communications where available, to inform people and report successes.
Meetings	Put energy on the agenda.
Walk rounds	Walk round the office at regular intervals to establish good practice. This could be undertaken by the green champion/s.
Stickers	Encourage people to think about saving energy and resources at the point of use, for example, on photocopiers.
Word of mouth	Generate messages to stimulate interest and get people talking.
Displays	Use part of an existing notice board or create a dedicated one about resource efficiency, or to inform on how the campaign is going.
Competition	Create competitions between teams, different buildings etc. on saving energy, reducing purchasing or increasing recycling rates. Competitions could include achieving targets, designing a poster or quizzes. Rewards can include office plants or Fairtrade sweets.
Internal communications	Include the energy saving slogan or message in memos, minutes or other standard internal communications.
Letters	Sending a letter about the initiative to a home address will attract attention.
Payslips	Adding energy saving messages to payslips is a good way of attracting attention.
Resource efficiency literature	Create leaflets, booklets or newsletters to include details of new procedures, campaigns, stories and case studies.
Suggestion schemes	Provide the means by which people can suggest saving ideas and offer rewards.
External input	Invite experts to talk about energy saving and environmental issues.

Source: *The Carbon Trust: Creating an Awareness Campaign, CTG001*

