

# HR INSIGHTS

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## Going Green and Recruiting Employees

Most people recycle and try to conserve water and electricity at home. However, when people arrive at work, the idea of conservation often disappears. Time magazine reports that offices are responsible for 40 percent of the carbon dioxide emissions and more than 70 percent of the total electricity usage in the United States. Idle computers in the business sector alone account for \$1 billion spent on electricity each year.

This waste not only hurts the environment, it also hurts your bottom line. One area that suffers from wasted resources is companies' ability to recruit qualified employees. Those workers, especially those of younger generations who grew up being more conscious of conservation efforts like recycling, prefer to work for earth-friendly companies. Time magazine reports that one-third of the nation's employees would rather work for a green company over one that is not environmentally conscious. And half of all workers wish their employer made more of an effort to be kind to the earth.

### Ways to Go Green

So what can you do to ensure that the earth-loving workforce will want to work for you? Below are some easy ways to become more environmentally friendly:


- Purchase office space in a building that meets the standards of the U.S. Green Building Council
  - The Green Building Council created LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification to standardize "green architecture." Among the standards outlined by this policy are provisions on water conservation, energy efficiency, materials used in construction and indoor air quality.
- Make minor adjustments to leased spaces
  - Since many companies rent office space instead of owning facilities, they have a limited ability to modify the structure or construction of the building. However, the Green Building Council devised LEED certifications for building modifications such as installing automatic lighting shutoffs and programming computers to power off after being idle for 15 minutes.
  - More ambitious companies wishing to save on water usage can swap out older toilets for ones that use eight gallons per flush. This will save

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a tremendous amount of water, as office buildings across the country use 4.8 billion gallons of water per day.

- Incorporate the environment into your recruiting efforts to learn more about what individuals find appealing
  - Hold focus groups at industry conferences to determine what “green” initiatives individuals in your field prefer.
  - Ask potential employees during job interviews what they value in a company with regard to environmental efforts and contact individuals who rejected a position with your company to determine why they did so.
  - Work with college recruiters and consultants to determine what most people find appealing, and implement those efforts within your company.
  - Ask employees how your conservation message comes across and get their feedback on your current efforts.
  - Use your website to showcase not only what your company does professionally but also what earth-friendly practices you have in place. Link your company’s job postings to environmental organizations (if your policies allow).
  - Contact the media to showcase the environmental efforts that your company has made, and get this information published in trade and industry publications.
  - Advertise open jobs in publications that would be of interest to those also concerned with the earth and highlight the green strategies your company has in place.
  - Include responsibilities to the environment among job-related tasks in open position descriptions. Going one step further, include knowledge of environmental impacts as one of the criteria for positions with your company.
  - While conducting interviews, outline how your company and its environmental efforts stand out compared to others in your field.
- Give employees incentives
  - Since roadway congestion accounts for 3.7 billion hours of lost productivity annually (or \$63.1 billion in wasted time and gas per year), companies can start green commuting initiatives for their employees. Nike employees are rewarded for commuting without being gas guzzlers in the program titled “Traveling Responsibly? Accept the Challenge.” Google employees receive free bus rides. These incentive programs and options attract workers who not only care about the environment but also hate sitting in traffic.
  - Many other companies allow their employees to work from home and avoid the commute altogether.
  - Set up bike racks for employees to use, organize car pools and offer only hybrid company cars.
- Incorporate environmentalism into your company culture.
  - Strive to make a difference in the conservation arena to win an award. This will be a great PR tool when recruiting new employees while also benefiting the environment.
  - Include holistic healing options into your company’s health plan.

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- Offer paid time off for volunteering and match donations to conservation causes.
  - Include your stance on the environment within your corporate goals, values, business objectives and/or mission statement. Highlight your positive environmental record in your annual report.
  - Create products (if applicable) that are friendly to the environment.
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