



Talk of the Office

DHAKA, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2011, E-MAIL: business@thedailystar.net

Time to go eco-savvy

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SCIENTISTS have long rung the alarm bells about the mounting threats of climate change, and its corollaries, such as hurricanes, droughts, and vast land's disappearing into the sea. But, although it is frightening, it was not easy for many to see its foreseeable link with the daily activities that often seem to be insignificant. These are enormous forces beyond control. But possibly there is something to do about it.

It is only now, as tremendous weather disasters are becoming so frequent and when many think it might already be too late, that it is finally hitting home that all can and need to do something.

By releasing too much CO2 by an excessive use of energy, and greedily using up all the natural resources, we are putting the balance of our planet at risk, and becoming irresponsible to the future generations.

The office is the best place

for most people to make the biggest difference, as more emissions are generated at office than at home. And it is not a thankless mission: it provides an incredible scope for energy saving, meaning more profit.

If businesses and organisations make united efforts, the potential for energy saving will be huge. There is a strong link between an office employee sitting at his/her workplace and the massive eco crisis that may harm the entire planet.

Not only does a green office provide great environmental paybacks, it is also a key factor in getting and retaining eco-savvy employees. Green business also goes some way towards saving money used in the business and safeguarding the bottom line against the rise in energy prices.

We can start today, as what we will need to do is simple, easy and well-known, luckily.

Recycling, among those, can be a common practice. The first thing to do is to talk it up.



GRAMEENPHONE

Employees of Grameenphone Ltd are seen lounging at GP House, an eco-compliant office, in Bashundhara, Dhaka.

Sit at a meeting at office and decide what steps are necessary in line with your plan to recycle things. It could be simple, like agreeing to use scrap paper as notepads, or using coffee mugs rather than disposable cups.

Think once before giving a print order, because a scary fact is, one tonne of office paper leads to around eight tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. Most printers can do double-side printing. So only make sure the printers are defaulted to duplex, and the consumption will come down dramatically. And another thing: only print the pages you need. This is easy to do by selecting specific pages in the print setup.

It is important to encourage communications by email, and read email messages on the screen to see whether those should get printed. Reduce fax-related paper waste by using a fax modem and by using a fax cover sheet only when necessary. Fax-modems allow documents to be sent directly from a computer, without the need for a printed hard copy.

Another habit to build is using the 'green transport'.

Ride on, instead of driving it, although it is hard in Bangladesh, until we have our backs to the wall. If the office is not within the cycling distance, consider buying a scooter, which is not only more eco-friendly than a car, but cheaper to insure, and will cost less to run. The alarming thing is: the

reduce carbon emissions significantly, and cut the risk of too much warming. Also 'green loans' are now available, thanks to Bangladesh Bank, and one may even be eligible for a rebate.

Replacing the traditional office lighting with more efficient alternatives, such as CFLs

energy needed to restart it. Practise switching off everything at the wall when you are not using it, and make sure all computer monitors are on power-saving mode, and will turn off after two minutes.

Cool it. Turn your air-conditioner down by two degrees in winter and up by two degrees in summer. No one will know the difference, but it will make a big difference.

Measure your print. Measure your carbon footprint [try carbon calculator] and create a goal at your company to try and reduce that by at least 5-10 percent within the first year.

While purchasing something, give priority to buying something recycled. It will also give your company a good publicity. Not only are recycled products cheaper, but using those is a great way to publicise your company's environmental commitment. And before deciding whether to purchase new office furniture, see if your existing ones can be refurbished. It is less costly than buying new and also helps the environment.

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Replacing the traditional office lighting with more efficient alternatives, such as CFLs and fluorescent tubes, is of great advantage. These may cost a few bucks more than the regular bulbs, but will save more on the electricity bills at the end of the month

average car emits 4.5 tonnes of CO2 per year.

Be sensible in energy use and opt for renewable energy. The 1990s was the warmest decade on record, and 2010 the warmest year -- it is the global warning of global warming. Using renewable energy, such as solar or wind power, can

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Make a habit of switching off. A fluorescent tube light uses 500 times more energy if left on for 15 minutes than the

Ecofont: print green

STAR BUSINESS DESK

HAVE you heard of the eco-font? A Dutch company has launched a font that reduces ink use by up to 20 percent while printing, by creating tiny holes in the letters.

Sprang, the company that designed the sans-serif font, says Ecofont works by omitting parts of each letter, effectively bringing down the amount of ink on a page.

The font, which works best when set in nine or 10 points, is available free from its website (www.ecofont.eu).

Available for Windows, Mac OS X and Linux, Ecofont, which is based on Vera Sans, an open source typeface, works with OpenOffice, AppleWorks or MS Word.

Sprang says that by making

its font freely available, it hopes to increase environmental awareness.

As Ecofont uses tiny circles placed in the characters to cut down on ink costs, it can bring down the amount of ink use by around 15-25 percent. For example, the Ecofont version of Arial can save a minimum of 26 percent when compared to the original Arial. This calculation is based on a high resolution scan after which the pixels have been counted.

Both the wallet and environment remain safe, as ink and toner are a heavy burden on both. Ecofont software is suitable for both private and business use.

The total costs of a printed page include the write-down on the printer, the paper, the maintenance costs and the price of the ink and toner. The

ink and toner represent the largest part of this price by far; the other items only represent a minute fraction of the total costs. For private individuals this is of course always a good thing. For companies, however, the amount of savings can be astonishingly large. The combination of ink savings and low licensing costs results in substantial profits through savings.

The production of ink is an especially CO2-intensive process, which is something and sadly not as well known as it should be to the public. By saving on ink and toner with Ecofont software, you considerably decrease your environmental load, and as a private person, and even more so as a company, contribute your share of social responsibility in an attractive way.



ecofont

In addition to the environmental and cost benefits, it is simply fascinating to see how our brains ignore the holes in the letters while we are read-

ing. People who print out a test page are surprised and delighted. Ecofont software clearly inspires people while enticing them with the 'fun

factor'. Via the Ecofont software, sustainability and cost savings manage to work their way into the daily lives of millions of computer users.

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