

SBN GREEN GUIDE

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS NETWORK OF MASSACHUSETTS



The Importance of Being Green

Being Green is crucial to the health of the environment as it is for humans. It is more than just taking care of the Earth. It is also about taking care of those on the Earth in making sure that there are enough resources for everyone today and in the future. The negative effects of climate change such as global warming and melting ice caps are evident. While we can't reverse time, we can still put in the work to protect the Earth that we love. And implementing green practices in our personal life and business ventures is one step closer to ensuring a healthier planet.

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS GUIDE:

**-IMPORTANCE OF BEING
GREEN- 1**

**-SUSTAINABILITY DURING
COVID-19- 2**

**-GENTLE GIANT MOVING
COMPANY- 3**

-RESOURCES-4

Green Teams are becoming very popular in small businesses. These help keep the business accountable and brainstorm innovative ways that businesses can be greener. Because more and more people are committing to greener practices, employees are now motivated to innovate new techniques of becoming greener in the workplace.

Businesses need to adapt to green practices in order to adapt to a changing planet. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a significant factor in how businesses are acclimating to the needs of the time. The values of a company are often key to a consumer's choice to buy products and services. Today, more consumers are choosing to shop and work at businesses that have green programming. According to a study by the United Nations Global Compact and Accenture, "...between 2013-2019, companies with consistently high environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance enjoyed 4.7x higher operating margins and lower volatility than low ESG performers over the same period." The time is now to integrate eco consciousness into our business models.

Sustainability During Covid-19

Stay Creative

In a changing landscape, more and more businesses are making the shift to sustainability through small changes in the workplace,

Here are some creative ways to be sustainable in the workplace:

- Use refillable ink
- Email digital invoices
- Use dry-erase boards
- Use reusable notebooks
- Use online sharing documents (ex. google docs)
- Implement Solar Energy into your building
- Build partnerships with businesses committed to sustainability
- Become a certified sustainable business to maintain the company's green standards and stay informed and updated on ways to be sustainable in the workplace



Photograph by: Dimitri Karastelev

Moving to Online

With Covid-19 many businesses have now moved online. It is expected that some offices may stay online even after it is deemed safe to go back to the offices. Here are some tips for remote work:

- Turn on the energy-saving setting on your devices
- Use online database systems which in turn leads to less paper use and less transportation of paper products
- Use online receipts to save paper (many of these systems also prompt the customer for their email address, which may be helpful when needing to build and retain the customer base)



Photograph by: Corinne Kutz

Gentle Giant Moving Company



Gentle Giant Moving Company, headquartered in Somerville Massachusetts, has committed to making their company greener over the last several years. The company participated in SBN's Sustainable Business Leadership Program and was formally certified as a green business in 2019. Through this process, they were given suggestions on how to improve their sustainability initiatives and incorporate new ones into their business model.

Upon learning about the amount of fossil fuels consumed and waste generated within their business, the Gentle Giant staff took charge to make a change in lessening their environmental impact. Because moving companies use trucks frequently, it was important to come up with innovative green practices to implement in order to compensate for the carbon emissions released from the moving trucks. The easiest way to become more sustainable in their practices was to use improved materials in their office building as well as packing supplies, boxes, and other supplies. They have implemented more eco-friendly materials into their everyday work day, and have also come up with creative ways to promote the reusing of materials.

One of the ways in which they've done so is through "Green Moving Month", a new initiative for the company that encourages customers to only utilize used boxes for their moves. This is a win for everyone as it both saves money for the customers and proves to be a more sustainable way for Gentle Giant to reuse their boxes. Reusing moving pads is another method used by the company that helps the customer save money and reduce waste.

Internally, Gentle Giant has also changed their materials. They have switched over to compostable silverware and put out more recycling bins in their office building. With the onset of the pandemic causing employees to work more remotely, Gentle Giant has momentarily paused their composting program. Once back in the office, the team plans to reimplement the program. Through these initiatives, Gentle Giant has built a reputation as a green business that both employees and customers are proud to work with.

This year Gentle Giant was recognized as one of SBN's Sustainable Business of the Year Awardees at the Fifth Annual virtual celebration of local, green, and fair businesses. The Sustainable Business Network of Massachusetts looks forward to the many more innovative sustainable practices that Gentle Giant will put in place.



Packing Material that Gentle Giant Uses and Reuses for Packaging



Compostable Tableware that Gentle Giant Uses at the Office

About the Sustainable Business Leader Program

The Sustainable Business Leader Program (SBLP) is the leading Green Certification Program for Small Businesses in America. Launched in 2008, in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the Sustainable Business Leader Program (SBLP) is a practical and affordable certification program that helps businesses “green” their operations and practices while saving valuable natural resources and money. To date, the SBLP has certified over 125 businesses representing over 25 diverse sectors from automotive to retail and small scale manufacturing.



Gentle Giant Employees holding their SBLP Certificate in 2019

Resources

- *50 Ideas for Sustainability at Work & Business.* (2020). ITU AbsorbTech. <https://ituabsorbtech.com/50-sustainability-ideas-for-business/>
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