

RE:think Review

Recognizing Efficient Businesses in Lane County



RE:think Businesses, those that are certified and those that are on their way, know that the key to conserving resources is using less and wasting less. In other words, preventing waste.

Integrating an Environmentally Preferred Purchasing policy (EPP) helps to prevent waste upstream. That means that the products you buy for your office, everything from copy paper to pencils and cleaners have been made from materials that use the least amount of resources or chemicals in their manufacturing.

Adopting an EPP policy at work takes some research but there are numerous sources for the products you use everyday. For a complete guide on EPP go to:

www.greenbiz.com/business/research/report/2004/01/20/green-procurement

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Think About It...

Double-sided printing and copying can save up to 50% in paper costs each year.

Windermere Real Estate

A Green Team Success Story

Windermere Real Estate formed a green team earlier this year to improve recycling and address resource use, including energy and paper. The team, supported by Windermere owner Matt Powell, used BRING's free RE:think program as a framework for getting started.

"The green team identified opportunities where we could cut back on paper and printing," said Kristena Cox, Windermere agent and green team coordinator. "Our office has training and policies in place for printing certain documents on two sides. We are moving to electronic files, and much of the research needed to perform a real estate transaction can now be done paperless and on-line," Cox added.

Windermere's green team also worked to improve the company's recycling systems. In April of this year, the company recycled 300 pounds of e-waste through NextStep Recycling and implemented comprehensive recycling in their building.

Another area the green team tackled was energy use. The 15,000-square-foot office has 100 agents working a variety of hours, sometimes late into the evening. "Lighting is approximately 30% of our electricity bill each month," said Powell. "Much of the lighting we have is older and inefficient. By utilizing EWEB's rebate program, we will have more efficient lighting, save money on utility costs and improve the working environment for our agents," Powell added.

Ready to start a green team of your own? Need help getting started? Call us at 541-746-3023 or send us an e-mail at info@rethinkbusiness.org



Closing the Loop

Why Buy Recycled Content Products?

Businesses that participate in the RE:think Program often ask us why purchasing paper products made from recycled content is part of our criteria for certification. The short answer is that the RE:think program is similar in its structure and criteria as other programs in Oregon. Marion County's EARTHwise and the City of Gresham's GREAT Business programs both require certified businesses to have a minimum of 30% recycled content in their paper products. Continuity aside, there is a bigger reason. Creating a strong market for recycled products is the key to completing the recycling process or "closing the loop." Closing the loop creates jobs, captures the economic potential of what we throw away, and reduces environmental impacts.

Regular readers of BRING's *UsedNews* know that most waste and greenhouse gas emissions are incurred during the manufacturing process. By purchasing paper products and office supplies made with recycled content rather than virgin materials, consumers can feel good knowing that natural resources aren't being wasted. Recycled content products use less energy, less water, and create less air and water pollution.

Recycled content paper products such as toilet paper and paper towels typically cost the same or even less than similar products made from virgin materials. Copy paper on the other hand, can be more expensive –sometimes. Where you shop and how much you buy can affect your upfront costs but shop around and compare prices.

For more information on recycled content paper go to www.edf.org/papercalculator/

Think About It...

One ton of recycled paper saves:

- 360 gallons of oil
- 7000 gallons of water
- 4100 KWH of energy, enough to power an average home for six months
- 60 pounds of air pollution

Source: California Department of Conservation



The Recycling Symbol: What does it mean?

The chasing arrows recycling symbol is on all kinds of products, from paper to plastics- but what does it mean? With little regulation on its use, the meaning of the chasing arrows has created confusion with the public. The presence of a recycling symbol does not necessarily mean the product will be accepted in your recycling



bin or that it contains recycled content. For example, the symbol can be found on plastic lids and clamshell take-out containers but when it comes to putting it in the recycling bin, it's a big no-no. When recycling plastic stick with size and shape, bottles tubs and jugs only.

Paper products with the symbol can indicate that it is recyclable or that the product is *made* from recycled material. Recycled content paper goods will usually have a percentage paired with the recycling symbol to indicate how much recycled content was used to make a particular product.

Symbol facts

The chasing arrows symbol was created in 1970 for recycled paper products. Later, it was given over to public domain but not trademarked. Although the symbol is used on products nationwide, the laws governing these products are determined locally – and vary widely.

In 1988, the Society of the Plastics Industry began to use the symbol on plastic containers and added numbers to identify resin types. The resin numbers help recycling centers organize like plastics together, but they don't indicate if the plastic is accepted in the local recycling system. Remember, bottles, tubs and jugs only!

You may also see the symbol on “compostable” products. Currently, there is no system set up to accept compostable plastics in Lane County. Compostable plastics aren't allowed in your recycling bin either. If you happen to pick one up it goes into the garbage when you're finished with it. Better yet, avoid compostable plastics if you can. It is always better to have a recyclable container than one headed for the landfill.

Congratulations to these newly certified businesses!



9Wood



Cawood



Oregon Research Institute

Re:think Certified Businesses!

- Jones & Roth CPA's
- Eugene Coffee Company
- Café Yumm!
- Ulum group
- McKenzie Family Practice
- Oregon Community Credit Union
- Nearby Nature