

Efficiency in the Office

Nearly every office, be it commercial or home-based, may have areas of inefficiency that can be improved upon. We are not talking sales figures or profit margins or budgets, but inefficient waste and resource management. For instance, let us look at some common aspects and consider how consumption can be reduced and how to make better use of resources.

Not all paper work and receipts need to be shredded, but sometimes, for the sake of security, it is necessary. This shredded paper is recyclable or it can be contributed in layers to a compost or worm bin. It can also be donated to animal shelters or pet stores where it is used in the bottom of cages to help keep them clean. This will ease workloads on staff, keep operational costs down, and the animals are more comfortable in their cages. The animal waste along with the bedding is easily composted.

Technology now makes it possible to save paper on a daily basis by sending emails. Worth mentioning, is the time saved as compared to communicating via the postal system. When sending a fax, if possible, refrain from using a cover sheet. For efficient paper use at the photocopy machine, set it to automatically print pages on both sides. When making draft copies with the photocopier or printer, use the reverse side of any suitable scrap paper. We keep a box of this paper handy for visiting children to color and draw upon. The blank side of any scrap paper can be used for shopping lists, reminder notes, game scoring, or the perpetual to do list(s) that we all have.

We often use sheets of adhesive labels in our office printer. The edges, top and bottom of each used sheet have 1/4" of remaining unused material. These can be trimmed to convenient lengths and stored in a small jar (or other storage container of choice). These labels come in handy when labeling items destined for the freezer, jam jars, bulk foods or shop and craft supplies.

Keep computer equipment such as external drives, printers and scanners powered off when they are not in use turn them on only for the duration that they are needed. Stand-by power (lights or clock displays) can be eliminated by either using a power bar or by manually unplugging the equipment. Sleep the computer during the day when not in use (lunch, coffee, or meetings) and turn all equipment off before leaving at the end of the day.

These are some simple suggestions, yet they will save time, money, and resources, which is in the best interest of any office.