



Forming a “Green Team” at Work

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Interested in forming a “Green Team” at your work place? Sometimes it is as easy as 1-2-3.

Step 1: Discuss the subject with your boss or senior management. Emphasize you believe there are low-cost answers, ways to save money as well as incorporating your CTR program. Discuss how the world is moving toward more sustainable solutions that will reduce the impact environmental damage. Promise to share your ideas with her or him before implementation.

Step 2: Form the team. Chances are you have already heard from or recognize those employees who are passionate about this subject and/or your advocates for CTR. Invite them to a coffee meeting and discuss the possibilities around forming a committee to address some issues. Even if you only have three people to kick it off, it is enough to start the program. Your enthusiasm will recruit others. Eventually, you will want to include a broad range of employees who represent key areas, including purchasing, materials handling, facilities and environmental services.

Step 3: Identify three simple goals for the year. It is essential that your goals be ones you can accomplish. From small beginnings...great things grow. Today’s acorn of paper recycling becomes tomorrow’s oak tree of a broad range of actions. Here are some small steps to get going:

- CTR is already part of your culture at your worksite. Use this as a launch pad to your Green Team efforts. Continue encouraging employees to use commute alternatives and when promoting other environmental changes try to incorporate CTR to provide a link to your Green Team.
- Paper and cardboard recycling is usually easy to get started. You will need convenient paper recycling containers in the work place so it is “easy” to separate the paper from the trash. Newspapers, magazines and all bonded paper can be easily recycled.
- Convenient aluminum can containers can also be easy to implement. Allow an employee to have the cans as long as they empty the container frequently.
- Install compact florescent lighting in an area to “see” that it is just as good as incandescent lighting at a fraction of the energy cost. Consider a give-away promotion where you buy 3-lamps at \$5.00 each and have a drawing. The only requirement for the winner is to report back to you “how they worked” at home. Use their positive comments to encourage others as well as install them in your workplace.



- Ask everyone to bring their own drink container from home for water, coffee, etc. When “free” cups are provided, there is no incentive to reduce use. This one step reduces company supply costs and removes waste from the trash.
- Identify a product that you regard as an environmental problem and obtain an alternate. Many people feel strongly about Styrofoam containers. They are highly visible and create a negative impression with many folks. Paper products can be more expensive but there may be enough value in public-employee relations that it is worth it. Another idea is to change to a paper product that contains a percentage of recycled paper. Paper towels and even bonded paper can be found with a recycled content.
- Small batteries can be easily recycled.
- Provide employees with useful information in these areas through your email system or newsletter. For instance, used electronic equipment can be recycled at Goodwill Industries instead of tossed in the trash. Home thermostats can be set two degrees higher in summer and lower in winter without usually impacting comfort. Check the home hot water tank setting: 120-degrees F is plenty for home use.
- Compile a simple “pledge form” that employees complete to initiate one action at work and one action at home. Be sure to include CTR into your pledge, even if it’s once a month or combining errands. Draw a winner and give them a prize of movie tickets, dinner for two or some other small “thank you.”
- Take advantage of national campaigns, like Earth Day, to promote your activities.
- During summer, consider a company “farmer’s market” to allow the sharing of home produce with employees. Or plan a potluck lunch to celebrate a company event that includes “home produce” foods and draws attention to local food production sources.
- Plan a bike pool in the summer. Encourage employees to meet at a designated area 2 or 3 miles from your worksite (be sure to get permission for parking where ever your meeting place is). Designate an avid bicyclist at your worksite to lead the group in the ride to work. If you don’t have an avid bicyclist, contact Bike Buddies through the Spokane Bicycle Club to arrange an experience bicyclist to ride with your group.
- The Web is an encyclopedia of ideas to keep you going!



The biggest advantage you have is your enthusiasm. Environmental sustainability tends to sell itself and others will follow your lead. It just makes sense, it feels good and it really is something that makes a difference.

Bon Voyage on this exciting trip!