Protecting Our Environment

The Next Green Frontier: Your Home Office

(NAPSA)—More and more employees are working from home these days as both individuals and companies look to decrease costs incurred from travel and the pricey rental of office space. Having a home office is convenient, economical and a great way to reduce the impact made on the environment. Whether you work from home occasionally or every day, there are several simple things that should be considered when setting up a home office to go green—and save money:

Look For Natural Light

When looking for a place to set up your home office, choose a place that has plenty of natural light. Not only is sunlight better than energy-sucking tube lights, it also puts less strain on eyes and even helps put you in a better, more productive mood. Even if it isn't realistic for you to set up an office with wall-to-wall windows or pepper your ceiling with skylights, choose a space in your home that receives ample light.

Consider Your Furniture

Instead of purchasing a cheaply made desk apt to end up in the garbage dump five years from now, invest in good-quality, solid-wood furniture. Products made from particleboard are not only not built to last, but they also emit eco-unfriendly gases. Look at thrift stores and consignment shops where a well-made piece of furniture can be found inexpensively. Taking the extra time to find something you love not only means a purchase that will last a lifetime, but it may also make going to work each day a little more pleasant.

Reduce Energy Use

To keep energy consumption—and your bill—low, you will need to use the right products and practice green habits. Consider upgrading older equipment that may eat up a lot of electricity with products that are ENERGY STAR® qualified. Many new products today give you everything you need to perform well while also saving you energy and money. For example, HP offers many ENERGY STAR®-qualified products, including the HP Officejet Pro 8500 printer, which reduces costs and energy consumption by 50 percent compared to many laser printers, and can save even more when you use the duplexing feature to save paper. You'll be glad you went green when you look at your next electric bill.

Print Responsibly

You will need to print—from presentations and customer documents to drafts you need to proofread. Printing can help you work efficiently, put your best foot forward and can give you a break from staring at your computer monitor all day. To go green, the key is to print responsibly and print right the first time to avoid wasteful reprints. There are some great tools out there that will help you do just that. When printing content from the Internet, use Smart Web Printing (www.smart webprinting.com), a free Internet application that allows you to collect, select and combine content from multiple Web sites so you can print exactly what you want without wasting paper. Go further and use the HP Carbon Footprint Calculator for printing to understand how much energy your printer uses, and its associated carbon output. And don't forget to print on both sides of a sheet whenever possible. Many printers come with a duplexing feature, or you can simply flip the page when printing as well.

Use the Real Green

Adding a little bit of foliage to your office will create a healthier environment. Plants absorb many air pollutants such as formaldehyde and carbon monoxide by storing them in their roots and transforming them into less hazardous gases. Areca palm and peace lily are some good choices for decorating your office and effectively filtering your air.

As the list above shows, it only takes a few adjustments to start making a meaningful impact to the environment. Not only will you be doing your part to save the planet, but you'll also feel good about saving a little green in your wallet.