

# The Commercial Environment

## How to Help

Want to do something?

Think about the mantra Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – in that order.



The list of ideas below offers suggestions for you to implement within your workplace. We are also anxious to help you make the best decisions for the environment and your organization - it is important to us. Not coincidentally, everything listed above also represents solid, long-term functional and financial business decisions. These are only a few suggestions that can be implemented to help conserve resources and our environment. We welcome your ideas and contributions that could be added to this list.

- 44,000 commercial buildings are demolished annually in the U.S. (EPA, 1998)
- 25-33% of all landfill is waste from construction, renovation and demolition. 57% of that is from commercial buildings (U.S. EPA)
- Commercial buildings use 17% of all energy in the U.S. (U.S. Dept. of Energy)
- 12% of drywall in new construction ends up as scrap (California Integrated Waste Mgmt. Board, 2002)
- Each U.S. citizen uses approximately 2650 cubic feet of solid wood every year (Natural Resources Defense Council)
- Steps to help:
  - Buy quality - quality products last and stay out of landfills.
  - Convert CRTs to flat screen monitors and save up to \$400 per year per monitor. They give off less heat and run on less energy.
  - Plan for change, and buy products that allow you to do so with agility.
  - Consider reducing your space and the individual footprints inside. By doing so you will use less energy, use fewer building materials, and have less to maintain.
  - Choose natural lighting first, and efficient lighting next. Plan lighting to be activated by use.
  - Choose products and finishes that have recycled content, and that allow you to recycle them.
  - Only use interior finishes (floor covering, dry wall, etc.) where necessary for functional reasons.
  - Choose an existing building in an excellent location, and minimize fuel consumption. Modular products allow use of today's technology in older spaces.
  - Create a beautiful environment. No one wants to sustain ugly! Recycle – champion the cause in your workplace!

