

The Future of Business: Going the Green Way

TECHNOLOGY HAS THE POWER TO TRANSFORM how the world approaches its environmental and energy issues. The Internet and networking technology is at the heart of a global technological ecosystem where people and businesses live, work, play and learn in a more environmentally responsible way. The fact is, today, a "Green IT" strategy is a must for corporations globally. However, to embark on this journey, corporations might have to consider questions like - do green practices always have to be about sacrifice, or can they actually contribute to a corporations' profitability? Are there significant revenue opportunities or cost savings that can be realized by "going green"?

The answers often depend on the different types of approaches that one is willing to consider. Corporations that go down a green path should understand that the long-term transition to a sustainable green corporation will be challenging. Nonetheless here are a few guidelines to keep a corporation on the path to success:

Consider the carbon footprint of the entire company - There is potential to reduce power consumption in every corner of the business. Create an energy management team to define and measure the carbon footprint, if you haven't already done so.

Make recommendations on where technology can enable savings - By facilitating internal discussions and consultations with technology partners, the energy management team can advise business leaders and department heads on reducing carbon emissions across all areas of operation.

Review IT and networking road-maps - Build energy savings into future plans, and anticipate changing external demands as technology becomes a key enabler of emissions reductions.

Conduct a strategic IT energy audit - Using an objective methodology, work toward a full assessment of present IT energy consumption.

Allocate and manage an energy budget - As energy consumption and carbon output come to be managed like other budgets, move toward an allocation system supported by regular energy audits.

Encourage employee collaboration through Web. 2.0 technologies - Invite employees to contribute ideas and take responsibility for specific actions.

Weigh gains and losses - Analyze how to reduce the overall carbon footprint by investing in technology—for example, explore whether deploying equipment for working from home emits less carbon than commuting to work.

Support energy-efficient practices - Encourage employees to turn off lights and power down desktops when not in use. Low-tech solutions can augment new software applications that monitor and control energy usage automatically.

Challenge vendors to work together - Support a collaborative approach to green IT by asking or requiring vendors to work together to design and implement green solutions.

There are also new innovations in Green IT such as EnergyWise. What this new technology essentially does is use the network intelligently to reduce energy consumption across an entire corporate infrastructure. It also uses technology to harness the power of the network to identify, manage, and reduce energy consumption and lower energy costs. In addition to these options, corporations that use collaborative technologies like TelePresence can reduce the need for business travel, thus reducing carbon emission.

Other technologies like global positioning systems, radio frequency identification, Web services, unified communications, next-generation broadband, wireless, and smart urban infrastructures, have also made it possible for complex systems to be managed—and self-managed—in innovative ways.

We are all on this journey of "Green IT" together, and we need to exercise and demonstrate best practices in running our business operations; on the other hand we must also be able to transfer this to our customers, suppliers and partners. Going green is about transforming the business ecosystem for the future, creating a new mindset, and using technology to its fullest extent. If we achieve this, we can change the way people work, live, play, and learn.



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