



“We wanted our workspace to reflect our commitment to the planet,” says Engel.

Reduce, reuse, recycle

3 DON'T USE DISPOSABLE GOODS.

Keep reusable flatware and a cup at your desk. If you buy takeout for lunch, carry it back in a cloth bag instead of a plastic one (every year, Americans throw away 100 billion plastic bags). At OrganicWorks, the green public relations and marketing company founded by Mara Engel and Cheryl Roth, new employees get stainless steel Sigg bottles (mysigg.com); the conference room table is set with a recycled glass carafe and cups from The Green Glass Company (greenglass.com); and there's a bin of ChicoBags (chicobag.com) at the reception desk for errands.



“When people walk into our office, they're struck by how easy it is to go green,” says Roth.

Save energy

1 SWITCH TO CFLS. Compact fluorescent bulbs certified by Energy Star use about 75 percent less energy and last ten times longer than incandescents.

2 USE POWER STRIPS. By plugging printers, computers, and other electronics into power strips, you can flip a switch and turn them off completely. Left on standby mode, electronics account for 5 to 20 percent of your energy bill.

4 THINK BEFORE YOU PRINT. If you don't need a hard copy, don't print. Otherwise, print double-sided on recycled paper. Consider getting rid of your fax, too; this little-used machine stays plugged in all the time and wastes paper. Instead, use efax.com, a website that allows you to receive faxes as e-mail attachments, suggests eco expert Danny Seo, author of the *Simply Green* book series.

5 SAVE BOXES AND BUBBLE WRAP. If you get a lot of packages, Seo suggests bringing the packing materials home and creating a mailing center in a closet (it will come in handy during the holidays). Or ask your local UPS or other shipping company if it will take your used Styrofoam peanuts.

6 ASK THE COMPANY TO RECYCLE. If your office doesn't recycle paper, bottles, and other materials, form a “green team” with co-workers and start a program. Learn how at energy.star.gov/index.cfm?c=guidelines.teaming_up_to_save_energy.

Furnish wisely

7 CONSIDER VINTAGE. When you need new office furniture, visit used-furniture outlets or craigslist.org. “A chair that's well designed but has damaged or ugly fabric can be re-upholstered for about \$50,” says Seo.

8 SHOP FOR GREEN MATERIALS. When buying decor, look for items made of eco-friendly materials. Engel and Roth found their bamboo reception desk at [Crate & Barrel](http://crateandbarrel.com) and hung a recycled steel Bendant Lamp by [Mio](http://mioculture.com) above it. For the walls, they used wallpaper by [Jocelyn Warner](http://jocelynwarner.com) and paint from [Benjamin Moore](http://benjaminmoore.com), both low in volatile organic compounds (VOCs). The reception area chairs from [Bernhardt Design](http://bernhardtdesign.com) are certified by Greenguard, an environmental nonprofit.

9 ADD PLANTS. Some potted plants, like philodendrons (a favorite at OrganicWorks) and peace lilies, help remove pollutants such as formaldehyde from the air; but any type helps create a peaceful, grounding vibe for the office. —Christine Richmond

Office buildings, shopping malls, and schools are responsible for half the carbon emissions released in the United States.