

TURN YOUR OFFICE GREEN!

– Go Green's top ten tips on how businesses can save energy and reduce waste –

SouthLondon.biz, the enterprise support arm of the Merton Chamber of Commerce, urges businesses to 'Go Green' and adopt some easy steps, to help save the environment and reduce their own running costs.

The top tips are part of a wider set of recommendations, which are given to local businesses that take part in SouthLondon.biz's GoGreen service. Set up in January 2007, the service operates across the five outer-London boroughs of Kingston, Merton, Sutton, Croydon and Wandsworth. It aims to educate small businesses and provide support on how to operate in a more environmentally friendly way.

The 'GoGreen' Top Ten Tips:

1. Open the blinds so you don't have to use so many artificial lights in the daytime
2. Print double sided
3. Use recycled paper wherever possible
4. Remove individual waste bins as people are more likely to recycle more if they have to use centralised bins
5. Use fluorescent ceiling lights in place of individual desk lamps
6. Monitor your electric meter in relation to your electricity bill
7. Use mains filtered water rather than bottled water
8. Use ceramic mugs or glasses rather than plastic or polystyrene cups
9. Turn off computers and monitors at the end of the day – a single computer and monitor left on 24 hours a day will cost around £45 a year¹
10. Place a small plastic bottle filled with water in your toilet cistern, thereby reducing the amount of water used per flush

CEO of southlondon.biz, Diana Sterck, comments: "Many office workers don't realise how simple but effective it is to take some of these steps. People want to help make a difference but many believe that to do so will take up lots of time and be very costly; this isn't the case.

"By adopting a greener approach, local businesses are now reporting that by taking up the service they have made savings in their business."

Andrew Brown, director of Elevating Success (a mentoring and training company based in Croydon), took part in the project and said: "We are hearing so much in the press about our

carbon footprints and recycling and ways that we can save energy...Having the report that GoGreen produced was very eye opening for all my staff and has really set us on a positive and practical path to save money and energy – and it's all been at a cost of just £10."

Diana Sterck added: "We set up the GoGreen service to improve the profits of small and medium sized businesses, through guiding them on reducing energy and water consumption, and reducing waste. To date we have helped over 400 businesses across the five boroughs."

Greening Business Officers (GBOs) who represent the GoGreen project visit a local business and review its current energy usage and waste management processes. Following the audit, information and advice is then provided in the form of a personalised action plan. The audit is funded by the London Development Agency and – at action plan stage – a small £10 (inc VAT) administration fee is required.

Once businesses have the action plan they can apply for a small grant to help them implement the changes needed. Ongoing support available through the service benefits them in other ways by meeting and joining forces with other local businesses on this project.

Companies that are interested in receiving advice and guidance from a GoGreen Business Officer (GBO) should contact southlondon.biz on 020 8947 0055, email gogreen@southlondon.biz, or write to GoGreen c/o Merton Chamber of Commerce, Tuiton House, 27-37 St George's Road, London SW19 4EU.

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¹ Carbon Trust 'Office equipment – Introducing energy saving opportunities for business' – March 2006

Notes to editors

About the GoGreen service:

The GoGreen service aims to educate and provide support to local businesses to decrease the environmental impact they have on the community, due to inefficient energy and waste management practices.

The project has specialist Greening Business Officers (GBOs) that visit local small businesses and work with them to help them save money by reusing, recycling and reducing energy usage.

Managed by Southlondon.biz (the enterprise support arm of the Merton Chamber of Commerce), and supported by the London Development Agency, the GoGreen project will run until March 2009. Currently, the initiative spans small businesses across the five outer-London boroughs of Kingston, Merton, Sutton, Croydon and Wandsworth.



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