



What these five graphics tell us about sustainability in business

Every business can embrace sustainability – it's good for both the planet and the bottom line.

Sustainability should be a focus for every type and every size of business. On the one hand, it's a social and environmental imperative; enterprises, like individuals, need to play their part in ensuring that future generations get a chance to live and prosper just as we do today. On the other, embracing sustainability can also have more short-term benefits.

Policies followed by practices can be a differentiator for customers and clients – even a must-have when you're putting in a tender for new business. The processes and background work in developing a more sustainable business can drive cost savings and push the company as a whole to become more efficient ⁽¹⁾.

Yet here we're not going to talk in vague terms about why sustainability is good for the planet and good for business but look in more detail at the specifics. Why should your company join the drive towards more sustainable business practices? What can you do to increase your energy efficiency and reduce your carbon footprint? How can the choices you make in terms of IT help or hinder you in this pursuit? These five charts and the accompanying explanations should help you get to grips with sustainability in the office, and why that's so important for your business.





1.

Sustainability should be on your agenda – but you need a business case and strategy

According to MITSloan’s 2017 Research Report, Corporate Sustainability is at a Crossroads, 90% of executives now consider a sustainability strategy important to remaining competitive ⁽²⁾. McKinsey’s latest Global Survey on Sustainability found that six in ten respondents said their organisations were more engaged with sustainability than they were two years ago, and in some industries, this grew to more than 80% ⁽³⁾.

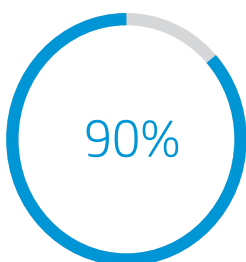
Why the growing interest in something that might seem peripheral to most companies’ core business? McKinsey points out a range of drivers, with the biggest (and the fastest growing) being that sustainability is aligned with the organisation’s goals, missions or values. However, respondents also felt that that addressing sustainability could help build, maintain or improve reputation, that this engagement met customers’ expectations, and that it helped organisations develop new growth opportunities and improve their operational efficiency.

In other words, you might say that sustainability is good for the company, its image and its reputation, but it could also help the company optimise its operations and capitalise on new opportunities. Example after example bears this out. McKinsey cites examples like a major brewer that identified some 150 possible improvements that could reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while saving \$200 million over five years ⁽⁴⁾. When a water company benchmarked its sustainability performance against other utilities, it worked out changes that reduced leakage and customer complaints while making a 25% reduction in operating costs ⁽⁵⁾.

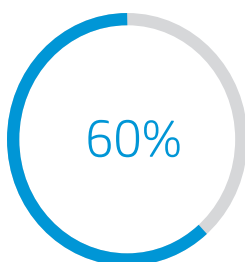
The average company working in the average office might not be able to create efficiencies or savings on that scale, but even the small stuff can add up. Defining a sustainability strategy is a chance to look in-depth at every area of your business and work out where you could save energy and reduce waste. Where you save energy and reduce waste, you also tend to work more efficiently and save money. Since 2014, McKinsey has found strong correlations between resource efficiency and financial performance, with the companies with the most advanced sustainability strategies doing best of all.

The key is, however, to have a strategy and a business case for sustainability; according to the MIT Sloan review, only 60% of companies have the former and a mere 25% the latter. It’s the business case that drives innovation, new processes and business models, and it’s the companies that focus on material issues that are most likely to profit from their sustainability activities.

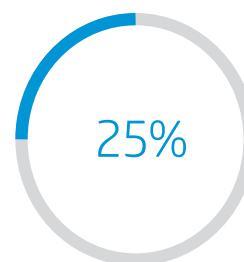
Finally, no company can afford to dismiss the link between sustainability and company values or reputation out of hand. As more companies embrace sustainability and report on their progress and their goals, so the pressure will rise on the companies they work with to align with those goals. What’s more, steps made towards a more sustainable business now could make it easier to meet such requirements in the future. In this way, sustainability becomes a competitive advantage – and you want to be the company with it, not the company without it.



of companies consider a sustainability strategy important to remaining competitive



of companies have a sustainability strategy



have a business case for sustainability



2.

The circular economy is here – and it's the future

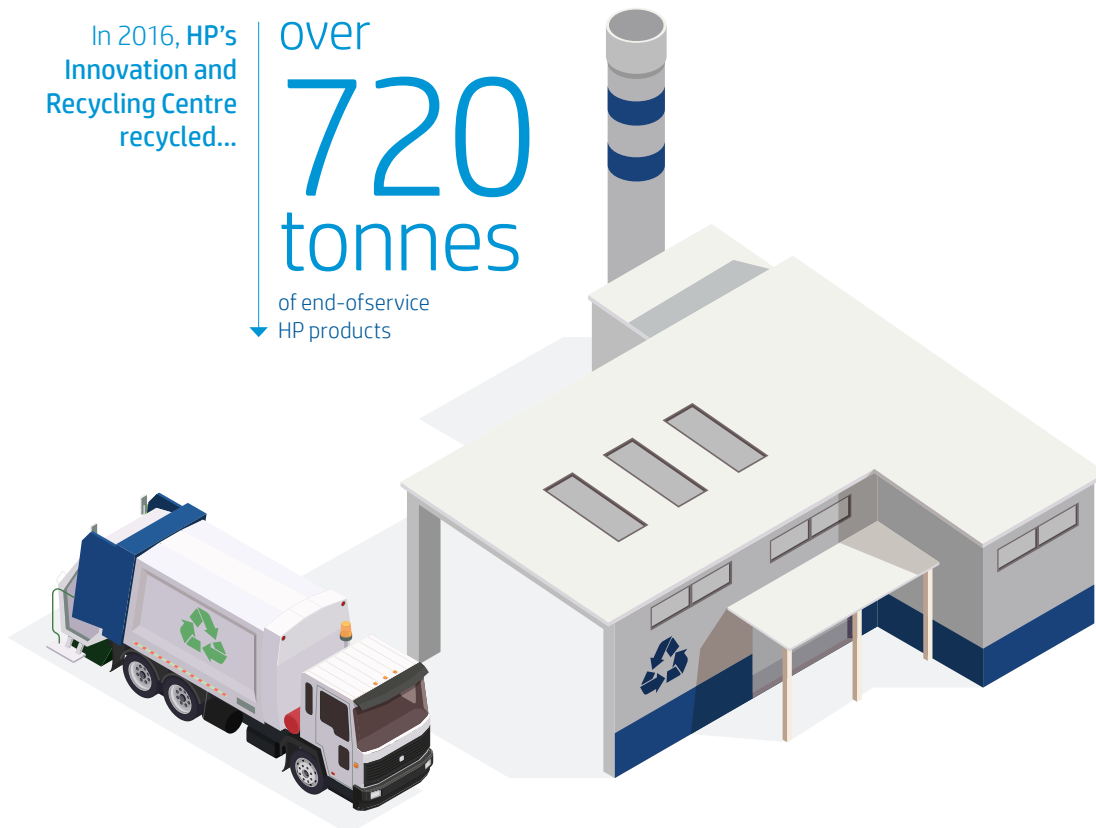
The circular economy is another business buzz-phrase, but again there's real substance behind it. While the linear economy, where natural resources are extracted and made into products, which are then used and thrown away, worked in the short term for much of the 20th century, but no longer makes economic or environmental sense. Tomorrow's companies are building on a circular model, where products and materials aren't discarded but pulled back into the business or supply chain and re-used, putting the emphasis on longevity, remanufacturing and refurbishment.

Scarce resources are replaced with renewable, recyclable or biodegradable resources, taking waste out of the picture. Instead of pushing ever-shorter upgrade and replacement cycles, Manufacturers look to extend the working lives of products and build platforms and services around them.

This might seem like eco-warrior pipedreams, but circular economies are slowly forming in the here and now. At HP, for example, the focus is on operations that continually recover and reuse more durable products and materials, so that they continue to play a part in HP's product lines rather than becoming waste.

In 2017, HP used over 18,000 tonnes of recycled plastic in its products overall and 99,000 tonnes of recycled plastic in over 3.8 billion Original HP ink and toner cartridges. This has kept 784 million HP cartridges and an estimated 86 million apparel hangers and 4 billion postconsumer plastic bottles out of landfills, instead upcycling these materials for continued use⁽⁶⁾.

It's not just HP taking steps towards the circular economy. In 2018 the European Commission took an in-depth look the circular economy and estimated that it would generate around 650,000 – 700,000 by 2030. With these results mainly being driven by employment demand in the waste management sectors to cope with higher demand for recycled materials⁽⁷⁾.





3.

Innovative technology can save energy – and cost you less to run

While giving newer products a longer lifecycle is a good thing, that doesn't mean holding on to outdated technology makes sense. New processor technologies and PC form factors are transforming IT. Since 2010, the energy consumption of HP's personal systems products has dropped by an average 34%⁽⁸⁾. The HP Elite Slice business PC is 70% lighter than HP's previous generation EliteDesk 800 G2 Small Form Factor PC, and is up to 50% more energy efficient⁽⁹⁾. In terms of durability and reparability, HP's products have come on in leaps and bounds.

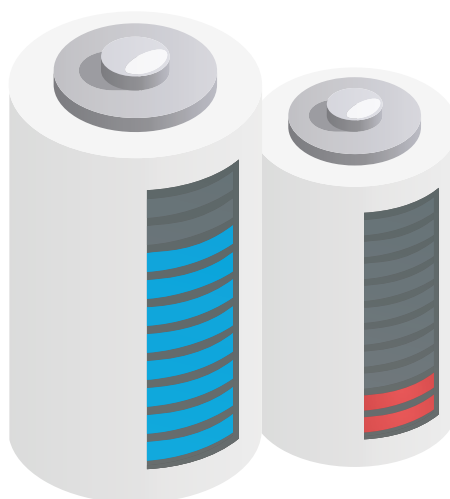
These trends extend to HP's printer lines as well. HP's ink-based PageWide technology is significantly more energy-efficient than conventional laser technology. According to third-party analysis, these printers reduce energy consumption by up to 71%, generate up to 95% less supply and packaging waste and reduce the carbon footprint of printing by up to 80%⁽¹⁰⁾. Not that laser technology is standing still. Since 2010, HP has reduced the energy consumption of its LaserJet line-up by an average 56%⁽¹¹⁾, and the latest models, powered by eToner cartridge technology, consume up to 42% less energy during use than previous generation models, contributing up to 55% less CO2 emissions⁽¹²⁾.

Lower CO2 emissions is good for the planet, but this energy efficiency translates directly into helping to lower running costs. What's more, the enhanced performance of new LaserJet and PageWide printers plays into consolidation, enabling one new printer to handle the same workload as several old ones. Throw in pull-printing, where print jobs only print when authenticated at the printer, plus the option to turn on duplex printing by default, and you have real opportunities to help cut waste and minimize the cost of printing.

That's good for sustainability – and your business's bottom line.

Since 2010 the energy consumption of HP's personal systems products has dropped by an average of...

34%





4.

Technology isn't just part of the problem, but part of the solution

Technology is often talked about as a source of social and environmental problems. Device manufacture is gobbling scarce Earth resources. Simply replacing some of that travel with video-conferencing or other forms of telepresence could have an enormous impact on a company's footprint.

Or how about improving service and reliability? HP is embedding sensors in new models in its A3 printer and multi-function printer line-ups, so that these printers stay more reliable over a longer lifespan, proactively warning users or service providers of a fault so that they can fix it before the effects can become more serious. This extends the device's working life and ensures it goes on to provide a great service for many years to come.

It's changes to manufacturing technology, however, that might have the greatest impact in the future. HP believes that its MultiJet Fusion 3D printing technology could help power a fourth industrial revolution while also driving a step change in sustainable manufacturing, making parts lighter and more efficient, improving their recyclability and reinventing the traditional supply chain. It enables manufacturers to print highly-specialised, customised parts locally and on-demand, cutting waste, transport costs and carbon emissions while enabling them to carry and store less inventory. Tie this in with higher use of recycled plastics, and you have a manufacturing method that leverages the circular economy. And while this is all good for the environment, it also helps manufacturers operate more cost-effectively. It's a boost for business agility.

Unilever rolled out a telepresence program across 30 countries in just two years, eliminating the need for 14,500 short-haul flights and more than 23,500 long-haul flights, resulting in...

CO² emissions reduced by...

113,500 tonnes

with cost savings of...

€40 million





5.

Managed services are a big sustainability win

Looking for an easy way to improve sustainability and reduce your carbon footprint? Adopting Managed Print Services and Device as a Service strategies is it. The service provider comes in and assesses your workflows, your existing device line-up, your practices and processes and your requirements.

They can then recommend devices and strategies that will help you cut energy emissions and drive down waste while also helping to reduce operating costs. And if you still need to convince the budget-holders, you can move a hefty chunk of your IT spending from expensive, upfront CapEx to more predictable and manageable OpEx.

In printing, for instance, the MPS provider might recommend replacing and consolidating a large fleet of different laser printers with a smaller, standard set of high-performance multi-function printers, using a reduced range of consumables.

They'll suggest printing policies that enhance security and reduce paper use to provide the supplies you need without a stockpile growing.

In the case of the British Library, a shift to Managed Print Services with HP and the DTP Group involved a reduction of the printer fleet from over 850 devices to under 200, with remote management for early warning of faults and low-toner levels. A pull-printing solution reduced paper wastage and enabled documents to be collected from any networked printer. This cut paper usage by 125,000 sheets, saving 3,475Kg in CO2 emissions, while lowering power costs by over 72%. Overall print expenditure was reduced by over 20%, while increasing staff productivity. In both business and sustainability terms, that's a huge improvement ⁽¹³⁾.

Similar advantages could kick in with a Device as a Service strategy, where the provider recommends a perfect mix of PCs, laptops and mobile devices to cover the requirements of each department in the business. The provider can purchase and configure devices to prioritise energy-efficiency and power management. They can support them in a way that extends their lifecycle and ensure that they go back into the circular economy once their time with your business is over. What's more, DaaS can help drive down costs, while ensuring your device line-up changes and scales to reflect the organisation's changing needs.

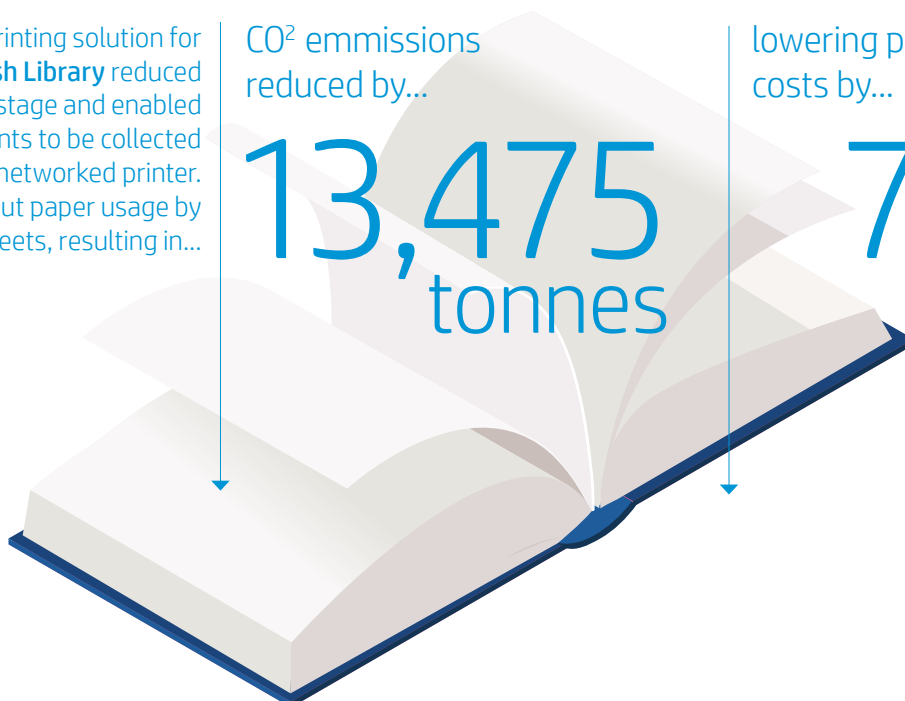
A pull-printing solution for **The British Library** reduced paper wastage and enabled documents to be collected from any networked printer. This cut paper usage by 125,000 sheets, resulting in...

CO² emissions reduced by...

13,475 tonnes

lowering power costs by...

72%



**LINKS:**

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13. HP Managed Print Services Topic of Influence: Mobility, June 2018 <http://h20195.www2.hp.com/V2/getpdf.aspx/4AA7-0326EEW.pdf>