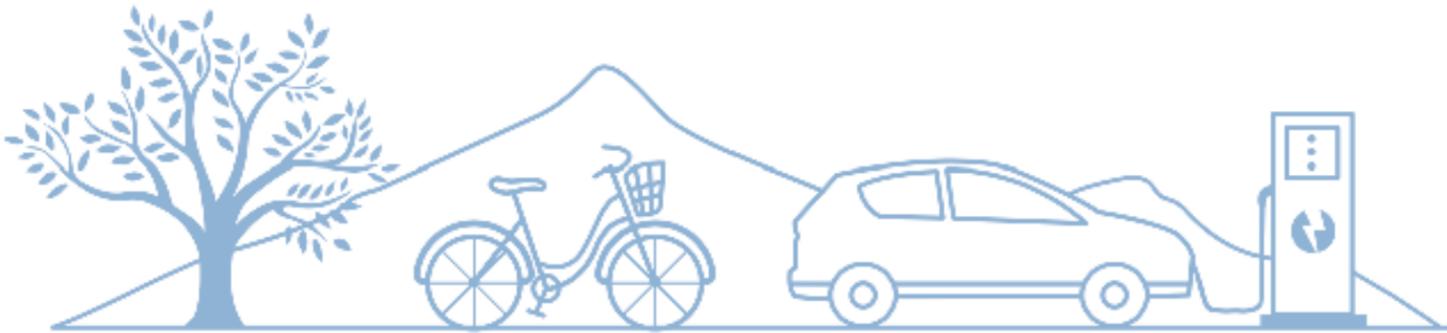


Environmental Stewardship

Caring for our land and natural resources is embedded in our community culture.

Now more than ever, our collective future depends on furthering sustainable solutions that support healthy economic growth and ensure community resiliency.

In the battle for talent, especially for Millennials and Gen Z, **companies must prove that they are good citizens.** Surveys consistently show that people under 40 want to work for employers that share their values, which is why businesses that prioritize environmental stewardship are taking the lead when it comes to attracting and retaining those employees – as well as customers.



Below you'll find actions your business can take—from first steps to innovative shifts—to be part of the efforts to sustain our quality of life for generations to come.

Reminders.

Individuals rarely take actions with the singular purpose of harming the environment, but it can be hard to change long-held habits. Help your team do their best with automatic reminders for printing less, shutting off electronics (all the way, not just sleep mode) when not in use and turning off lights when leaving a room. This could be signage, popups when printing or a minute or two at each staff meeting – whatever feels most natural for your business.

Avoid the bad.

Use certified non-toxic cleaning, laundry and maintenance products in non-aerosol containers such as those that are **Green Seal certified** and make sure that hazardous and “universal waste” items such as fluorescent bulbs/tubes, aerosol cans, paint, electronic equipment, and batteries are properly disposed of. Find local disposal sites at www.IWMA.com.

Make it official.

The California Green Business Network—and their local arm, the **SLO Green Business Network**—work with small to medium sized businesses to identify and implement the solutions work best for your business. It's free to participate and you'll receive technical assistance and personalized recommendations.

Help your employees love their commute.

Nearly **45 percent of the U.S. workforce** has a job that's suitable for full-time or part-time telecommuting. Offering your team members the option of working from home just one day one day a week means one less commuter on the road contributing to **greenhouse gases** and traffic. If that's not a fit, consider a commuter benefit program that will allow employees to pay for commuting costs (transit, vanpool, biking) with pre-tax money. Even easier, provide a few company bicycles for employees to use when commuting during the day. Whichever way you go, incentivizing it will make people way more likely to participate.

Serve up sustainability.

Does your office provide paper plates or plastic cutlery for employees and/or event attendees? Consider keeping reusable dishware on hand and contracting with a **local rental company** for larger events.

Engage your employees.

Create efficiency goals and make it fun and inclusive by celebrating your success. How can you measure your savings? How can your green mission enhance your community or better serve your customers? Get ideas and input from your employees and they will embrace your new goals. Challenge your staff to try sustainable practices each week and dedicate a few minutes of your weekly staff meeting to share how it went.

Go with the flow.

Need a new appliance? Make sure you are replacing faucets, toilets and showerheads with low flow fixtures. You'll see the difference in your bill immediately.

Promote it (and your business).

Buy promotional products that directly encourage green behavior. Instead of buying branded bottled water for each meeting or event, try branded reusable coffee mugs or reusable water bottles. Not only will you avoid adding to the over 2.5 million plastic water bottles that are used every hour by people in the United States alone, but your marketing message will be put in front of people's eyes for far longer than it would on a product designed to be single use.

Challenge = opportunity.

Achieving our climate and environmental goals requires us to think beyond business as usual –we can't just reduce emissions but must also **develop and implement new technology**. From energy and manufacturing to healthcare and education, businesses across industries that can capitalize on solving these challenges will come out ahead. How could your business be part of the solution?