

Ottawa, 2008-06-30

This document was revised in 2009 to reflect our new letterhead format.

We Did It: Our Office Is Now 100% Paperless!

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The reduction of paper is the single greatest action that can be done for environmental sustainability in office work and related business. iTTUKKi Corp (GroupEHS) presents their story.

It started a number of years ago. While conducting an environmental impact assessment of our own business, we realized that the use of paper accounted for most of our waste. Even though the paper was shredded and sent to recycling, we believed we could do more.

2004

Initial steps were taken in 2004 when it was decided that all client related documents, final reports, etc. were to be delivered in electronic format only. In addition, a new filing system was created on the server. Documents and folders were classified as they had been in the past but now in electronic format. The last fresh package of 500 sheets of paper purchased by our company was in August 2004!

The impact on client and employee habits was anticipated and further steps were planned but not executed until later. From 2004 to 2006 all printers were removed except for one unit linked to the network via the server. Employees were allowed to print a document for temporary use. This was needed since we recognized that working with only one monitor may pose a problem when researching and comparing documents.

The printer during this time was loaded with draft paper (i.e. already used on one side). All sheets of paper had to be used twice then shredded and taken to recycling.

2005

The milestone in 2005 was the set up of a 100% paperless fax system. By then, paper was used very seldom in the office.

Official documents, and all proposals and contracts, were signed electronically.

2006

The last toner cartridge for the lone printer was purchased during 2006. By 2006, employees and clients have generally become comfortable with the paperless environment.

2007

Additional flat screen monitors were purchased and all workstations were equipped with stereo video ports to allow side by side viewing of documents across extended monitors.

The lone printer was taken off-line. As of 2007, there are no printers in the iTTUKKi Corp (GroupEHS) offices.

2008

And now? Well, we are getting bolder. We have now removed the fax line. We realized that other parties continued to use paper fax machines. We have removed our electronic fax machine to force our clients and suppliers to use emails and electronic documents. The result has been positive.

We no longer respond to requests for proposals which oblige us to produce paper hard copies of the proposal document.

We choose not to do business with prospective clients who cannot adhere to our paperless policy. The following statement is the first sentence of our contractual Terms and Conditions: "In line with our corporate value of environmental sustainability, the client agrees to conduct business with us in a paperless fashion as a condition of this contract." Feel free to use it in your contracts.

From a business perspective, one may argue that opportunities may be lost by imposing our value of environmental sustainability to this extent; however, we continue to bring on many new clients who continue to collaborate with us.

Benefits

Our paperless experience over the past four (4) years has been very encouraging. We no longer purchase paper and related products. Each employee manages a small budget for notebooks, and agendas. We have not purchased any pens, highlighters, staples, paperclips, or notepads since 2004 because many of these items find their way into the office from third party promotions.

The workplace looks cleaner – there is no clutter. We also have a lot of extra space since we no longer need filing cabinets.

Planning

This narrative does not show the planning and collaborating required for going paperless. Stay tuned for a future article which will bring to light some of the challenges and planning required for going paperless.

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