

Seattle Law Firms Go Green!

It's no secret that law firms use a lot of resources, especially paper, and those resources cost money, even more than you might think. A Minnesota study found that an average business's labor, storage, mailing and disposal costs associated with paper use are up to 31 times the purchasing cost.

But it doesn't have to be this way. Many Seattle law firms are leading the way to a more sustainable future, and demonstrating that resource savings can go hand-in-hand with reduced operating costs and improved client and employee satisfaction.

Read on for accounts of what these leading firms are doing to reduce their resource use. For free resource conservation assistance at your firm, contact [Resource Venture](#).

Foster Pepper Reduces Paper Use

By Brenda Bole, Legal Secretary, Chair of Green Team

In the early 1990's, a group of attorneys and staff members from about a dozen Seattle firms explored ways to decrease the environmental footprint of the legal industry. Foster Pepper was one of the founding members of this group, known as The Law Firm Waste Reduction Network. The group examined elements of the practice of law with an eye specifically toward the most efficient use of paper. Accordingly, we explored paper reduction in the office as well as in the courts. Research was conducted, guest speakers were invited, rules were reviewed, and procedures were examined. In 1995, the group applied for a grant through the former Seattle Solid Waste Utility under a "Less is More" program. The grant funded the publication of a book summarizing their findings and offering recommendations on practices other firms could incorporate. This book, entitled *The Case for Waste Prevention*, was printed and distributed to every law firm in King County.

Foster Pepper's program was initially based on the recommendations in this book, including the formation of an in-house "Green Team", and the firm's adoption of the mission: To encourage and develop a firm environmental ethic in order to service client needs consistent with minimum possible impact to the environment. To implement a comprehensive set of waste minimization strategies, focusing on the three elements of the recycling loop: waste prevention, recycling and buying recycled.

One of the most effective steps in the success of our program has come from the inclusion of our Green Team and our environmental

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Start Saving Today!

Check out the following resources and start saving money and resources:

- [***Take the challenge! Sign up for the ABA-EPA Law Office Climate Challenge.***](#) *Adopt one of three EPA voluntary programs and implement their recommended practices. Your firm will be recognized by both the EPA and the ABA, and your carbon emission reductions will be tracked.*
- [***Oregon Lawyers for a Sustainable Future***](#) *has developed a number of tools, including a Law Office Sustainability Guide, to help guide*

program in our new employee orientation. This process gives all new employees the requisite information to support the firm's environmental mission and facilitates pride and ownership in the program.

firms interested in becoming more sustainable.

The firm began to focus on how information was distributed in-house. Whether it was the daily newsletter, the weekly library newsletter, the firm docket, or accounting details, the firm examined the best way to convert these hard copy documents into a digital format. The transition was truly step-by-step.

Resource Venture, a service of Seattle Public Utilities, provides free resource efficiency assistance to businesses. Please contact us at resourceventure.org or 206-343-8505. Thank you.

As technological advances were made available, Foster Pepper adopted further exciting and positive changes. Whether setting up an "extranet" for in-house and client communications; storing large amounts of information on CD's rather than paper; adding PDF scanners to every copy machine; adding PDF conversion capacity to each desktop; having all copy machines set with a default setting for two-sided copying, or making presentations using PowerPoint slide shows, each of these steps had a major impact on the firm's ability to reduce paper use. As the court systems convert to electronic filings and service of process, the firm's reliance on paper is even further reduced. Foster Pepper now has a strong Automated Legal Support Department that continues to convert its litigation practice to a digital format.

For many years, Foster Pepper has used "tree free" paper, using paper made from recycled cotton for all of our letterhead and business cards. We have also switched to eucalyptus paper for our copying needs. And at the time of our last remodel in 2006, which included the reduction in size of our law library, hundreds of pounds of books were recycled through book finders across the country.

In addition to our paper recycling, procedures are also in place for recycling aluminum and plastic containers. Packing wrap and Styrofoam packing peanuts are collected and used either by our Systems Department or delivered to an outside business that can reuse them. Foster Pepper also strives to keep toxic material from the waste flow by recycling all used batteries. Used cell phones also are donated to domestic violence centers, and over the holidays, cards are collected and donated to children's hospitals.

These pro-environmental measures supported by the firm provide a sense of pride and ownership for all staff and attorneys – because they know they are using best practices with the "minimum possible impact to the environment."

It has also become clear that our clients care. In 2005 Foster Pepper was awarded with The BEST Award by the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, Seattle City Light, and Seattle Public Utilities for its recycling program.

Foster Pepper's Green Team continues to explore new ways to reduce the firm's carbon footprint, including switching to paper-less prebills, supporting food recycling in our café (which will include paper plates and cups), and measuring our carbon footprint, so we can set our goals and meet new, higher standards.

Graham & Dunn Goes Green

By Zach Hiatt, Associate

For over 100 years, the law firm of Graham & Dunn has taken pride in providing the highest caliber legal services to its clients in an efficient, cost-effective manner. In this age of unprecedented environmental challenges and increased awareness about humankind's impact on the earth's climate, we at Graham & Dunn have come to believe that providing the highest caliber legal services also means doing so in an environmentally responsible manner.

As a result, today the people of Graham & Dunn have something else to be proud of: Graham & Dunn is going green! During the past year, Graham & Dunn has revitalized its "Green Team" and has taken a hard look at how we can be better stewards of the environment through sustainable office practices. Here are some of the things Graham & Dunn is already doing to promote sustainability in the workplace:

- Encouraging employee use of a company-owned electric car for business-related errands (If you work in downtown Seattle, you may have already noticed our beloved Graham & Dunn "Clown Car"!)
- Providing free Metro bus passes to all employees
- Using compostable silverware instead of plastic when disposable silverware is necessary
- Improving recycling efficiency through increased access, better signage, and the addition of food waste compost bins
- Providing automatic, energy efficient lighting through sensors and longer-lasting bulbs
- Educating employees about sustainable practices in both their personal and professional lives through regular Green Team emails and posters
- Enhancing video conferencing capability to reduce travel
- Recycling printer toner cartridges and batteries
- Providing a bike rack, lockers and showers for employees who commute by bicycle
- Reducing paper through increased use of electronic scanning and filing, paper-less billing, and double-sided printing
- Using recycled-content paper, including letterhead

While Graham & Dunn's Green Team is proud of its accomplishments to date, we realize this is no time to rest on our laurels. In addition to improving and enhancing the green practices listed above, here are some of the new initiatives Graham & Dunn's Green Team will be working on in the coming months:

- Adopting a firm-wide sustainability policy based on the Model Law Office Sustainability Policy developed by [Oregon Lawyers for a Sustainable Future](#)

- Installing software to automatically turn off employee computers at a certain time each night
- Setting all printers and copiers to double-sided default printing
- Producing 'closing books' for all transactions on CDs instead of hard copy (already in place for some deals)
- Enrolling in the American Bar Association – Environmental Protection Agency Law Office Climate Challenge, increasing the firm's use of post-consumer recycled paper.

Finally, even as we tackle these new challenges and continue to promote sustainability within our own firm, members of Graham & Dunn's Green Team will also continue to participate in outside efforts, including our Resource Venture workgroup and the development of Washington Lawyers for a Sustainable Future – a counterpart to the Oregon group. Questions or comments about Graham & Dunn's Green Team can be directed to [Wendy Goffe](#) or [Zach Hiatt](#).

Schwabe, Williamson and Wyatt Sustainability Initiatives

By Sara Turner, Marketing/Administrative Assistant

"It is not the strongest species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones who are most responsive to change." - Charles Darwin

Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt is a Pacific Northwest firm that has been actively working to reduce their impact by following a more "green" approach. Schwabe recently held a "Seattle Sustainability" week for their staff, aimed at educating employees about projects and ideas underway at the firm. Included in this week long event was the option to sign up for Flexcar, information on how to compost at home and on ongoing building management activities to conserve resources, and a presentation from Resource Venture on ways to reduce internal waste.

Schwabe is currently:

- Recycling 5,200 pounds of paper per month
- Recycling computers, monitors, cell phones and batteries
- Changing copiers and printers to default double-side print
- When possible, archiving files electronically to reduce paper use
- Purchasing recycled-content products
- Selecting sustainable caterers to provide catering services
- Using durable plates and flatware instead of paper and plastic products
- Encouraging staff and attorneys to use mass transit and alternative forms of transportation by providing mass transit subsidies

The concept of sustainable business is one that Schwabe strives

for on a daily basis as the firm works to balance people, profits and the planet. Schwabe collaborates with such leaders as Axis Consulting, Resource Venture, Flexcar, and the Oregon Natural Step in an effort to reduce our carbon footprint. The firm has also purchased renewable energy credits to offset 100% of the carbon emissions associated with electricity usage in the Portland office. The firm offers a Sustainability Blog on their intranet for employees who wish to share information, ideas and events regarding sustainability. With the help of organizations such as Axis Consulting and Resource Venture, Schwabe is dedicated to making a positive change toward more sustainable efforts within the legal community and beyond.

Your Feedback Welcome

In 2007, Resource Venture facilitated three meetings with a Legal Services Workgroup. These meetings were primarily focused on paper reduction in the Seattle legal community. Now we would like to hear from you!

What tools and resources do you need to continue resource conservation at your office? Are there any topics you are particularly interested in learning more about? [Email us](#) your ideas as we plan for next year.