At Staples, we have business solutions to address your most pressing needs – whether reducing costs, driving environmental sustainability, improving operational efficiencies, or all of the above. Customers rely on our e-procurement expertise, account management, and customized programs to deliver significant savings, year over year. For all Staples-driven programs, we make it easy for you to measure the environmental impact, with clear results on energy, tree, and water savings, carbon emission reductions, and other metrics important to your business. Below is an example of how one healthcare organization turned to Staples to consolidate small office supply orders as part of an enterprise-wide initiative to be more environmentally friendly.

The Situation
A large hospital group located in the Northwestern U.S., has been a long-time partner of Staples for office products, working together for nearly 10 years. With 20 business entities, the customer wanted to take a close look at its procurement processes in support of corporate-wide sustainability initiatives. One piece of this analysis involved understanding the environmental impact of its office supply purchases and implementing policies to be more green and eco-conscious. To accomplish these goals, the hospital turned to Staples for help.

The Solution
Staples conducted an assessment of the hospital’s procurement history – what products people were buying, how often, in what quantities, and the total spend. Like many organizations, office supplies at the hospital were often purchased ad-hoc – by multiple people and for small dollar amounts. This meant that the hospital received multiple deliveries in a week, potentially with the same products (e.g., paper, pens, etc.) being shipped to different departments.

To eliminate these redundancies, Staples recommended that the hospital implement a minimum dollar amount on all office supply orders, requiring that a $50 total was
Many organizations believe that implementing a minimum order amount will encourage employees to become ‘shoppers,’ making unnecessary purchases in order to meet dollar minimums. In fact, we find the opposite to be true, with small order consolidation resulting in dollars saved and significant environmental advantages.

In order for this initiative to be successful, hospital employees needed to understand why the program was being rolled out and how their buying behaviors would positively impact the organization – and the environment.

Therefore, Staples recommended a multi-pronged awareness campaign, which included regular communications via internal newsletters and emails, as well as alerts posted on Staples’ online ordering system.

In addition to educating users about the environmental advantages, Staples crafted tips and tricks about cost-effective and efficient ordering. For example, the organization would benefit from the “Save Cart” functionality on the Staples site, allowing users to add products throughout the week until the $50 minimum was reached, as well as ordering with other colleagues and departments.

The Results

The hospital’s small order initiative has delivered tremendous environmental and organizational benefits. As a result of working with Staples, the hospital has reduced its total number of office supply orders by 27 percent. In addition, while the hospital’s average order size has increased by 25 percent, the organization has saved money in the process, with overall office supply spend down by two percent.

Specifically, for orders under $50, the numbers have dropped dramatically – from more than 6,000 in 2009 to just 583 in 2010. Today, orders of less than $50 comprise just three percent of the hospital’s monthly office supply spend.

Eliminating 6,000 small orders generated tremendous environmental benefits, eliminating the need for 6,000 boxes and shipping labels, 12,000 packing slips, 35,000 gallons of water, and saving 61 trees.

To learn more, please visit www.staplesadvantage.com