

Green Purchasing

As a business, leveraging your purchasing power is one of the strongest ways to create positive change and act harmoniously with company values and ethos. Purchasing products that are more environmentally preferred and that support companies with responsible environmental and social practices not only aligns your business's practices with sustainability initiatives but also supports other companies that act sustainably.

Green purchasing practices can be instituted across procurement in many different areas, ranging from electronics, linens, food, paper products and office supplies, and cleaning. There are abundant opportunities for a business to incorporate green purchasing into routine procurement practices. For more information about green cleaning specifically, please refer to the "Green Cleaning" guide.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Save money across the life of a product. Analyze the environmental and economic impacts of a product over the long-term rather than the short-term. Be sure to think about costs associated with a product, including energy and water usage. For example, an energy efficient appliance such as a water heater could cost more initially but considering the reductions on utility bills as a part of the whole cost of the product could mean that appliance will cost less in the long-term.

Support companies with similar principles for environmental responsibility and sustainability. Not only can you make a statement for your business, but you can support a company with shared values.

Reduce the environmental impact of operations. It is helpful to compare product quality and cost by doing an upfront and thorough comparison of products.

THIS GUIDE IS APPLICABLE...

FOR

- ✓ Food & Beverage
- ✓ Travel & Tourism
- ✓ Lodging
- ✓ Recreation

TO

- ✓ Management
- ✓ Event Planning
- ✓ Food Operations
- ✓ Housekeeping
- ✓ Maintenance & Operations
- ✓ Front of the House

BEST PRACTICES

1

Evaluate all purchases and eliminate unnecessary purchased items. For example, paper receipts can often be replaced by electronic receipts. Also pay attention to items that are purchased but not frequently used as opportunities to reduce purchases. Reducing unnecessary purchases has both environmental and financial benefits.

2

Develop a Green Purchasing Policy. Begin tracking which companies and products meet all your needs, including through quality of the product, availability and cost, and environmental impact. A Green Purchasing Policy is a set of guidelines that staff can follow when making procurement decisions to ensure that environmental sustainability is considered for purchases. Think of this document as living and consider updating it as new products are discovered or needs change. Using purchasing power thoughtfully can lead to positive change.

3

Search for energy or water efficient appliances. Facilities in the hospitality industry use many types of appliances – collectively, the energy and/or water usage of these appliances can add up and lead to a large impact financially and environmentally. To reduce the long-term financial and environmental burden of high energy and water usage, purchase energy or water efficient appliances as appliances need to be updated. Check out [Energy Star](#) and [WaterSense](#) certifications for energy and water efficient products, respectively. To assess at the facility-level, see if your local utilities offer free audits which often include recommendations to reduce energy or water usage.

4

Compare available products to existing certifications to find the right fit. There are a variety of different certifications for products to assist in procurement decisions. It is important to do some research and understand what the certification means to avoid green washing, or marketing intended to make a product look more environmentally sustainable than it truly is. Some reputable certifications include [Energy Star](#), [WaterSense](#), [Green Seal](#), [Safer Choice](#), [EPEAT](#), [Forest Stewardship Council](#), and [Fair Trade Federation](#). Avoid products that are simply labeled as “natural” or “sustainable” without additional detail.

5

Consider the entire lifecycle of the product. A more environmentally preferred product might have a higher upfront cost, so it is important to consider the entire lifecycle of the product. Which product do you expect to last longer? Which product is easier to repair or service rather than replace? Does the manufacture offer product takeback so that a product can be recycled or appropriately managed at the end of its useful life? Which product will lead to lower utilities bills? Be sure to consider products holistically for a more accurate cost comparison.

BEST PRACTICES

6

Avoid disposable products. Many products available come in heavily packaged containers, are intended for single use, or are immediately disposable. It is generally good practice to avoid these types of products when possible to reduce waste generated from procurement choices. Instead, try to purchase products in bulk or in package-free containers. Consider reusable products such as plates and cups to avoid the financial and environmental cost of disposables.

7

Start small and then expand your practices. Reevaluating procurement choices to consider environmental sustainability may appear overwhelming and complex. We recommend that you start small and take each opportunity possible to consider a more sustainable choice in purchasing as they arise.

RESOURCES

Environmental Protection Agency

- [Recycled Content \(ReCon\) Tool](#)

Green Hotelier

- [Responsible Procurement](#)

Environmental Paper Network

- [Paper Calculator](#)

Northeast Recycling Council, Inc.

- [Guide to Greening Hotels Through Waste Management & Green Purchasing](#)