



SURVEY SAYS: SUSTAINABILITY IS THE NEW WORKPLACE STANDARD

New global HP study confirms sustainability in the workplace is no longer optional, here's how resellers and suppliers can help employers

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For years, in many corners of the globe, the war for skilled talent in the workforce has raged on. [Record-low unemployment](#) in the U.S. coupled with a [decreasing global population of young people](#) — and aided by the acceleration of connectivity and job opportunity — have created an interesting equation, one that is imperative for employers to solve.

Today, for the first time ever, the employment script has flipped. Employees are largely in the driver's seat when it comes to choosing, when, where and how they want to work, and are not shy about voicing their workplace needs.

One of the biggest demands amid this workforce revolution? Sustainability.

HP released a new global study that proves sustainability has quickly become the new workplace standard. No longer it is a luxury, but rather an imperative for businesses to implement eco-friendly practices — for the purposes of recruiting, hiring and retaining talent, and ultimately ensuring the longevity of their organizations.

The Modern Demand for Sustainability

Of 20,000 participants — including the general population, office workers and office supply decision makers — surveyed in 10 countries, 61 percent believe business sustainability is mandatory for businesses. Moreover, 40 percent said they would change jobs if their employers didn't implement sustainable business practices.

Six in 10 respondents were adamant that sustainability should be part of every business strategy, and they said overlooking it would be as bad as ignoring diversity and inclusion. In fact, nearly 40 percent were so firm about this that they said they might express dissatisfaction in public forums if their employees were not fully committed to the environment. This was particularly true amongst Millennials.

In addition, the survey found an employer's green business practices directly influence its ability to hire and retain top talent. Nearly 60 percent said they view sustainability as critical to engaging the workforce of the future, and about half believe top talent will only want to work at companies with eco-friendly business practices. That number spikes to almost 75 percent in both China and India.

The Second Wave of Sustainable Initiatives: Print Supplies Procurement

Frequently, the first wave of sustainable changes in an office is likely to be addressed through big ticket items like LEED building certification and energy efficient lighting. Now, employers are focusing on the next layer of easily overlooked sustainable improvements like composting, the direct purchase of renewable energy, and the purchase of OEM ink and toner cartridges.

In fact, this research points to the fact that office supplies must play a vital role in every business' commitment

to sustainability. Yet, some supply decision makers do not realize that their purchasing choices are actually costing their companies time and money.

About 35 percent of office decision makers admitted to buying counterfeit or “knock-off” remanufactured ink and toner cartridges for their office printers, and almost 45 percent said they may have unwittingly done so. Why? Because more than half (58 percent) of U.S. workers surveyed were looking to save a little dough, echoing a penny-wise but pound-foolish approach worldwide trend.

The problem is that knock-offs don’t often perform as well as genuine products, and many purchasing agents do not know this. For instance, more than half of workers surveyed (53 percent) said they didn’t realize non-genuine or “knock-off” cartridges can’t be recycled or reused, meaning that [most of them end up in landfills](#). What’s more, few recognize these knockoffs can use 40 percent more energy, consume about 55 percent more fossil fuels and cause users to print up to 29 percent more pages to get a clean print.

A Potentially Big Business Advantage

Virtually all survey respondents said they want brands to proactively provide safe products and reduce environmental impact. Nearly 75 percent said brands should exceed government regulations and push for even tighter regulation on the safety of their products.

Of equal interest, about 65 percent of global consumers said they would pay more for products from companies that demonstrate their commitment to reducing their environmental impact. That is an important opening for brands and their partners to educate and evangelize for sustainability, gaining new customers and pleasing office workers as they do so. Sustainability is not only good for the planet, it’s beneficial for business as well.

The bottom line: office and printing supplies can and should play a role in an organization’s commitment to sustainability — and purchasing eco-friendly supplies is vital for building trust with current and future members of an organization’s workforce. The companies that make, sell and resell them should be eager to support a [circular economy](#) that focuses on reuse and recycling, something that HP has been doing for 27 years. More than 80 percent of HP ink cartridges and 100 percent of HP LaserJet toner cartridges are now manufactured with “closed loop” recycled plastic, and HP has used more than a half million pounds of ocean-bound plastic to make its ink cartridges.

Since 2000, [more than 199 million pounds](#) of recycled content plastic have been used in 3.9 billion HP Original ink and toner cartridges. This includes diverting 716,000 pounds of plastic from reaching the ocean – the equivalent of more than 25 million plastic bottles – and repurposing it into HP cartridges. In fact, to further this commitment, HP is investing \$2 million in Haiti to add a new plastic bottle washing line to its ocean-bound plastic supply chain. The investment creates additional jobs in the country and eliminates the need to ship plastic bottles elsewhere, saving time, energy and resources.

It is results like these that make sustainability real and make the ethos of sustainable impact easier to evangelize with clients, customers, office workers, and anyone eager to be part of a greener future.