



Capitalizing on the green market

Going green is suddenly a major industry—and it's not just big companies that can benefit from making their operations environmentally friendly. If your business isn't thinking green yet, you're missing out on opportunities to grow business revenue, enhance your brand and save money. Problem is, it can be tricky to know where to start. Here are some steps to help make your business eco-sensitive—without losing sight of your business goals.

✓ **Lay the groundwork.** First ensure that your company complies with all local, state and federal safety, health and environmental regulations. This provides the foundation for more substantial moves such as reducing waste and improving energy efficiency. Now is also the time to create a vision statement outlining your intentions.

✓ **Do your research.** Closely scrutinize the impact your business has on the environment. Once you understand what your company consumes (think energy and materials), as well as what it wastes

(emissions and packaging), you can begin to identify ways to reduce your environmental footprint.

✓ **Get employees involved.** Consider creating a "green team" comprising people from all levels in your company. These employees may be charged with everything from running the office recycling program to educating other employees.

✓ **Start small.** You don't have to green your entire operations overnight; even simple changes can have big impacts. For instance you might begin by asking employees to shut off their computers at night and use recycled paper. Next, consider getting an office energy audit, purchasing ENERGY STAR® office equipment and switching to less toxic cleaning supplies. Then, keeping your vision statement in mind, create a game plan to help guide you through more comprehensive changes. This can help reduce the effect each change has on your company's productivity and bottom line.

Learn more at business.gov and greenbiz.com.



ENERGY STAR® office equipment meets strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy. Items with the Energy Star logo are guaranteed to:

- 1 Use less energy
- 2 Save money
- 3 Reduce pollution
- 4 Help protect the environment

Offline Spending for Online Success

The numbers are in. Research from iProspect and Jupiter Research underscores the importance of driving potential customers online: 65 percent of online search users are compelled to search by offline channels.

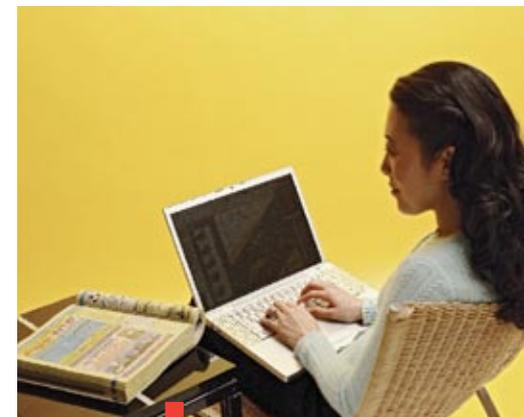
Print advertising is particularly effective: 30 percent of those search users came from print ads. What's more, the research found that 30 percent of those who were led to a website from print advertising ultimately purchased something online.

And marketers in the know predict that businesses will increasingly use offline media—print ads, Yellow Pages, newspaper publicity, television ads and the like—to drive customers to the web. The goal? To entice and direct prospects to your business website, where they can find in-depth info about your business products or services.

"A huge percentage of the American population goes online to research everything they buy—whether they buy online or offline," says Kim T. Gordon, president of National Marketing Federation, Inc. (smallbusinessnow.com) and author of *Maximum Marketing, Minimum Dollars: The Top 50 Ways to Grow Your Small Business* (Kaplan Business, 2006). "You need to use tactics such as print

advertising and television spots to pique people's interest and drive them to your website for more information."

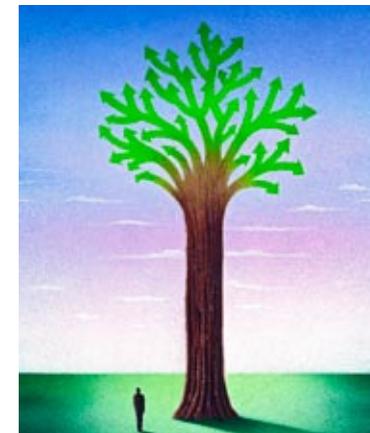
You can't show potential customers everything about your product in an ad. But you can get them interested enough to visit your website to fill in the details. Making a great offer—whether it's the chance to learn more, the possibility of a limited-time discount or a "tease" offer that can only be explained online—may be just the call to action customers need.



PRINT ADS that direct customers to your website yield results.

"Whatever advertising form you use, have an ad that speaks to the benefit users will derive," Gordon says. "They'll go to your website to learn more."

Beyond including your web address in your offline advertising (a must), make sure you include your company name, product name, tagline and other relevant key words. Customers who see your ad may not remember the web address, but they likely will recall certain words or phrases—and may use them later to find your site. Then you simply make sure quality information is available when customers arrive.



Diversifying in a Downturn

Large companies may position themselves to weather economic downturns by diversifying goods and services. Can you do the same with your business?

Yes. But it can be risky, particularly during volatile economic periods. Before you dare to diversify, consider these do's and don'ts:

➔ **Do** research thoroughly. If you're expanding into a new market, make certain it's doing well. If you broaden your customer base, ensure that your audience's needs match what you have to offer.

➔ **Do** stick with what you know. Complementary products and services make sense but moving into whole new areas likely doesn't.

➔ **Don't** forget about your existing business. If you lose focus on current customer satisfaction you may be headed for failure.

➔ **Do** know when you're better off staying the course rather than moving into uncharted territory.