

for their residential or commercial properties, but he also works hard to make his own company green.

Aside from recycling and buying wind power, the Group 3 office has hot water solar collectors for winter heating, night radiant for summer cooling, photovoltaic grid tiebacks and night-time cold air intakes for summer cooling, says West.

Out with the paper

Even many businesses not a part of the green industry are implementing environmentally friendly initiatives in the workplace. Consider what is happening at the accounting company Moss Adams.

According to Bobby Kay Nelson, senior tax manager and director of the Southwest cost segregation practice for the firm, Moss Adams is no longer issuing formal paper paychecks or W2s. Instead, employees use direct deposit and can download W2s on the company's secure server.

"We're a completely paperless environment," she says. "That means, unless a client absolutely needs it in paper, we send it electronically. We e-file our tax returns and when a client sends us a document, we scan it into a system instead of making copies."

She adds that being a paperless office

helps the environment, but it also makes it easier for Moss Adams' employees to share information among all their western offices.

For its part, Wilson & Co., an engineering and architecture company, is about to accept the city of Albuquerque's Energy Star Challenge and become an Energy Star Partner, says Howard Kaplan, the company's manager of architecture.

The company also has established a Green Task Force, he says, to reduce energy use at its 48,000 square foot, two-story building. The task force also will look at expanding the company's existing recycling program and examine water use and transportation issues, he says.

As a design company, Kaplan says Wilson is intent on designing more green projects.

"Right now we have five LEED projects in various stages, and we are going to be talking to all our clients about the benefits of green building and trying to get them to come on board," he says. "We are also very active in



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Beierle inspects cactus on EDI's rooftop garden.

and a sponsor of the U.S. Green Building Council, New Mexico Chapter."

But why does Wilson & Co. care about greening up its own workplace? There are two reasons, says Kaplan.

Reducing costs

Kaplan says he has long been active in the green building industry, but Wilson's CEO, Jim Gibbs, also has been reading about how businesses can use green initiatives to reduce their operating costs, as well as provide health and welfare benefits to their employees.

Not only that, he says, but as Wilson & Co. encourages its clients to "green up" their buildings, the firm needs to provide a good example.

"We want to show our clients we are doing what we can to green up our workplace," says Kaplan. "But there are also benefits in terms of operating costs, employee retention and employee productivity."

Kaplan even has advice for other companies thinking about greening up their own buildings.

"It's not hard," he says. "And you have to allow your employees to become involved. There are employees who care about this and want to be involved. So make it an inclusive process."

Walking the walk

Consultants battle greenwashing by crafting a reliable message

BY LAURA PASKUS | SPECIAL TO NMBW

With their communications company, Mind Over Markets, Carolyn Parrs and Irv Weinberg help their clients develop green messages and communicate authentically about greening their businesses. In other words, they make sure companies are walking the walk and not just talking the talk.



Weinberg

They also run a green marketing blog, greenmarketingblog.com, which offers advice on how to communicate about green issues.

"You've heard the term 'greenwashing,'" says Parrs. That is when a company makes misleading statements about

its environmental practices.

Today's consumers are savvy enough to recognize when a company is trying to pull the wool over their eyes. Misrepresenting your company will inevitably lead to trouble, says Parrs.

Mind Over Markets helps a number of local businesses, including the Santa Fe-based BioShield Healthy Living Paints, which offers products derived from natural and easily-renewable resources without harmful chemicals, toxins and additives. And they are working with Summit Energy, an energy management company and energy purchaser, to develop a "green first response kit."

"That's for clients when they are asking 'how do we start bringing renewable energy into our energy business?'" says Parrs. "The kit explains their green stance and offers beginning solutions on how to green their energy business."

Many companies offer in-house recy-

cling or have banned bottled water, but according to Parrs and Weinberg, there are many more simple ways companies can initiate green changes in their own workplaces.



Parrs

Companies can reduce indoor air pollution by choosing natural and non-toxic carpets, paints and cleaning products.

"By greening up, you can provide a safe and healthy workplace for employees," says Parrs. "That can even include perfumes. A fragrance-free and toxic-free workplace is one way to reduce indoor air pollution."

Adds Weinberg, "There is a tremendous benefit in employee productivity, which really translates to the bottom line."

A company can reduce its carbon footprint by encouraging teleconferencing and telecommuting in lieu of air and vehicle travel. Companies can further reduce their carbon footprints, as well

as fuel costs, by converting commercial fleets or delivery vehicles to hybrid or electric vehicles or using bio-fuels in place of fossil fuels.

The use of e-mail for memos and communications can drastically reduce the amount of paper being used within an office, says Parrs. Some companies even attach a signature to the bottom of e-mail messages, asking the recipient to consider resisting the temptation to print the message.

The printing process itself can be "greened," says Parrs.

Companies can encourage the use of soy inks and environmentally-friendly printing processes. Tree-free paper is readily available at many office supply stores, says Weinberg, including Office Depot.

The two add that many workplaces have company kitchens that are stocked with the basics, such as milk and sugar or else, vending machines. By offering organic products, employers not only make responsible consumer choices, but also show concern for the health of employees.

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