

Greening of Office Supplies – Part One

Environmental and Human Health Impact: Reduced employee exposure to asthma and headache triggers and substantial increase in use of recycled content, and post-consumer content paper and plastic products; supporting the recycling market and decreasing use of virgin natural resources.

Business Impact: 600 unique conventional office products substituted with environmental options; resulting in a 49 percent or \$277,000 annual savings.

Challenge

Business offices typically find themselves using an unimaginable variety of office supplies from pens to clips, file folders to white boards, and everything in between. Aside from helping employees do their jobs and express ideas, some of these products may have an adverse environmental and human health impact at some or multiple points during their life cycle. There are, however, many environmentally preferable office supplies available on the market. While Kaiser Permanente's supplier offered these products, we wanted to advance the selection and maintain or reduce spend.

Aim/Goal

- To increase the visibility and selection of greener office supplies available through the national KP supplier.
- To create a phased plan for substituting environmentally preferable products with less desirable office products.

Team

Ryan Hoang – Sourcing Manager, Business Products & Professional Services

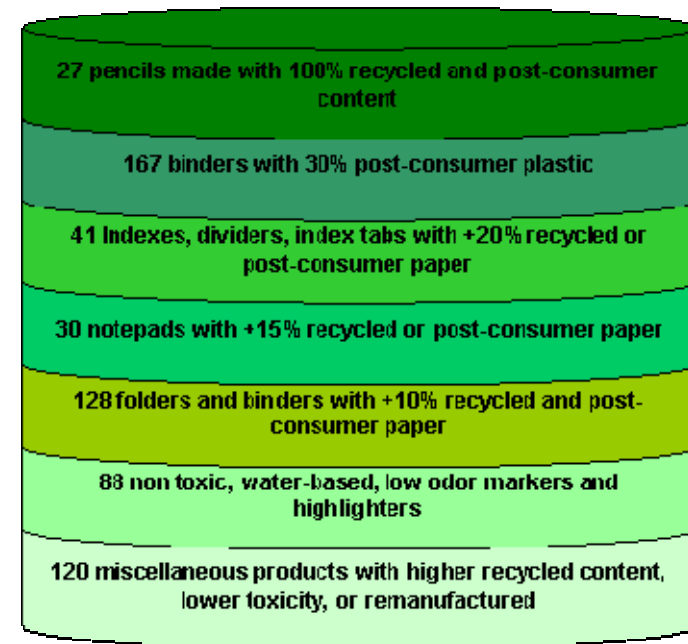
National Materials Leadership Team (NMLT), the group responsible for reviewing all non-medical products

Actions Taken

- ✓ Kaiser Permanente communicated our ambitions to expand the environmentally preferable offerings of office supplies to our supplier.
- ✓ Obtained a master item list comparing conventional products to their green alternative, where alternatives were available.
- ✓ Reviewed pricing and identified 600 product substitutions that would yield cost savings or cost neutrality.
- ✓ Reviewed environmental alternatives for the 600 products to ensure the product characteristic claims were reliable.
- ✓ Presented opportunity to the NMLT and requested approval to automatically substitute requests for a conventional product with an environmentally preferable product, where available.

Results

Breakdown of 600 unique office products and their environmental attributes



Lessons Learned

- ✓ It's not always easy to identify if an environmentally responsible product exists for a given category.
- ✓ It's important to partner with suppliers, who know their product offering best, in order to identify where alternatives exist.
- ✓ Environmentally friendly products do not necessarily cost more.

Next Steps

- ✓ Continue to overhaul the Kaiser Permanente office supply portfolio by substantially increasing our purchase of recycled content copy paper and remanufactured printer cartridges.