Sustainable Office Supplies: Town of Chapel Hill Purchasing Decisions

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Goals

- Analyze current & past purchasing decisions
- Relate Chapel Hill to other towns/orgs with EPPPs
- Improve the town’s EPPP in a cost efficient manner
Methods

- Internal Research
  - Office Depot purchases
  - Purchaser Survey

- External Research
  - Office Depot product analyses
  - EPPP Case Studies
Methods: Internal Research

- Office Depot
  - 2+ years of town purchases
  - Individual product analysis
  - Recycled product analysis

- Town purchaser survey
  - Qualtrics
  - *Mail and Internet Surveys* by Don Dillman
  - Including open ended response questions
Methods: External Research

- Office Depot product analysis
  - Recycled cost analyses
  - Product price analyses (w/ staples too)
- Purchasing policy case studies
  - Origins
  - King County
  - Langley
  - NASA
  - Burlington
Development of Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policies

- In response to the nation’s waste disposal
  - 1970: “America has been described as a nation knee-deep in garbage, firing rockets to the moon”
  - 2009: Orange County’s landfill nearing capacity, and more residents recycling

- Public organizations develop EPPPs to ensure a market for recycled materials and recycled-content goods
Innovation and the Green Market

- Drivers of innovation of green products:
  - Consumers
  - Regulation
  - Advocacy groups

- These forces pressure suppliers and manufacturers to develop “green” products and services
  - Organizations acting as consumers can impact the supply chain.
Conclusions from Case Studies

- NASA’s Langley Research Center
  - NASA benefited from the federal government’s enormous buying power; price and performance are significant

- California
  - Communication between consumers, suppliers, governmental organizations, and other parties is vital.

- King County, Washington
  - The policy places a premium on maintaining the *environmental dialogue*

- Burlington, Vermont
  - Policy reflects the growing concern over public health and climate change, and the capacity of small organizations to pressure distributors/manufacturers
Policy Suggestions

- A mechanism for employee feedback (departmental evaluation of “green” products)
- Ensure *environmental dialogue* (communication) between suppliers, purchasers, residents, and other interested parties: reports, newsletters, publicity
- A paper policy that promotes environmental awareness: printing the recycle logo on documents, duplexing
- Take advantage of existing environmental certifications/standards
  - Green Seal and the EPA
Results: Purchasing Overview

- Current Purchasing
- $100,000 yearly average spending
- Most commonly purchased items:
  - Copy Paper
  - Ink Supplies
Results: Greatest Expenditures
## Results: Recycled products overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCT</th>
<th>%RECYCLED</th>
<th>PRODUCT</th>
<th>%RECYCLED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FILLER PAPER</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>MAILING SUPPLIES</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DESK COLLECTIONS</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>COLOR SINGLE INK</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<tr>
<td>FILE FOLDERS</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>PAPER PRODUCTS</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>INDEX CARDS &amp; FILES</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>APPT. BOOKS/PLANNERS</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>COLOR COPY PAPER</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>WIREBOUND NOTEBOOKS</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHITE COPY PAPER</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>LEGAL PADS</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>BINDERS</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>ENVELOPES</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>LASER PRINTER SUPPL.</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>BUSINESS FORMS</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>OFFICE STATIONERY</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>SELF STICK NOTES</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONO SINGLE INK</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>WIRELESS NOTEBOOKS</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</table>
Office Depot’s Product Guidelines

- Reduced waste
  - Recycled: minimum 10% post-consumer recycled or 20% total recycled (10% PCR and 50% total for mailing supplies)
  - Remanufactured: ink and toner cartridges from previously used products
  - Refillable & refills: products that replace one-time-use disposables
  - Rechargeable: batteries and chargers to replace one-time use batteries
  - Rewritable: CDs, DVDs and Flash Drives to reduce paper and allow reuse
Office Depot’s Product Guidelines

- Reduced energy
  - Reduced energy in use: "Energy Star" qualified electronics and lights
  - Renewable energy in use: solar powered or manually cranked products

- Reduced chemical use
  - Reduced chemicals in use: Certified non-toxic writing instruments and supplies
  - Reduced chemicals and waste in disposal: Biodegradable liquids and non-toxic solids
Cost Comparison

![Bar chart showing cost comparison between Current Cost, Recycled Office Depot, and Recycled Staples for various office supplies such as Color Copy Paper, White Copy Paper, Storage Cabinet/ORG, Self Stick Notes, Paper Products, Appt. Books/planners, Binders, and Wirebound Notebooks.]
Cost Comparison

- Current Cost
- Recycled Office Depot
- Recycled Staples
Cost Comparison

- Design Paper
- Index Cards & Files
- Laser Paper
- Indexes/Dividers (Pack.)
- Office Stationary
- Report Covers
- Desk Pads
- Filler Paper

- Current Cost
- Recycled Office Depot
- Recycled Staples
Total Money Spent

- Current Cost
- Recycled Office Depot
- Recycled Staples

67%
1. For which Town department do you work?

2. In an average month, how many times do you purchase office supplies for your department?

3. In an average month, how many dollars do you spend on office supplies for your department?

4. Please list the **three** office supply items you purchase most frequently.

5. a. Where do you usually purchase office supplies for your department? Check all that apply.

   - Online from Office Depot
   - In-store from Office Depot
   - Online from a chain retailer other than Office Depot
   - In-store from a local office supply retailer
   - Online from a local office supply retailer
   - Other [ ]
Results: Purchaser Survey

Average Purchases

- 3 times monthly for $215
- Most purchased: toner cartridges and paper
- Variety of retailers (majority Office Depot)
- Focused on bulk purchasing
Results: Purchaser Survey cont.

- Saving money: greatest priority
- 30% aim for recycled paper content
- Noteworthy purchaser recommendations:
  - Less paper usage
  - More bulk purchasing
  - Strict town purchasing guidelines
Future Purchasing Suggestions

- Bulk purchases
- Remove desktop inkjet printers
- Expanded toner & paper policy
- Increase accessibility
- Price points and sustainability
- Brochure for purchasers
Conclusions

- Past purchasing
  - Decent attempt at purchasing recycled
  - Many small purchases

- Future purchasing
  - Decrease purchase frequency and quantity
  - Strengthen purchasing guidelines
    - Target green products
  - Continue analysis to monitor trends
    - Similar studies for other products