

# SUSTAINABILITY AUDIT TIPS

Sustainability and waste audits in the work place are normally 70% common since, 20% asking questions, and 10% basic knowledge. The purpose of these audit tips is to help identify where to look with one's common sense and why ask questions in an office setting. This Sustainability Audit Tips is meant only to be an aid for conducting a Sustainability Audit.

## Three Basic Principals

- 1) The professionals you are auditing know their work environment better than you do. Take advantage of them; ask questions, ask for their opinions, and ask what they would like improved.
- 2) In the work place many sustainability opportunities are invisible because people become accustomed to seeing or doing the same thing every day. Often busy people become used to working with a flawed system rather than to take time to fix it. The Sustainability Auditor is a fresh pair of eyes for to see these things.
- 3) Take time to find out what problems people are most concerned about. Ask them what they expect most from the audit. Concentrate on these items because people are more likely to implement the improvements they are worried about.

## Where to Look with the Check List:

- 1) Look and ask for what good sustainability things people are already doing. Let people brag. It gets them to think about other things to show you.
- 2) When touring the workspace look at the floors, the walls, the ceilings, and the location of furnishings. Do there seem to be the barriers or smooth channels for workflow? Things like dirt and wear on the floor, or how many turns someone must make to go from one station to the other, show the workflow pattern. This can indicate of how much thought goes into efficiency and sustainability.
- 3) Look at **WHAT** people do with computers, copiers, printers, lab benches, and so on. Look at **WHEN** tools are used such as only for large runs, or for printing all the e-mails that come in, or everyone using it at once. Look for **WHERE** the tools are used such as a central location, or an odd in the way location, in a confined space, or is the plug overloaded. Unless it is obvious, don't worry about **HOW** they use the tools, usually plenty of practice has already found the best ways.
- 4) Do people look comfortable in their surroundings? If not, finding out why this is often leads to good sustainability items. For example, several people have to wear sweaters in their cold offices because the office coffee maker is sitting under the area thermostat (or a window shining on it most of the day). A more difficult example is people losing time at the copier because there is not enough table space to organize copier work? Other examples of people losing time are, working in too much noise, or inadequate ventilation.
- 5) Look at what people throw away. It indicates the attitude for doing something positive like sustainability. Lack of information is indicated if many people have too many recyclables in their trashcans. If a lot of useful stuff or multiple drafts are thrown away, it can mean people think they are too busy to do anything sustainable.