

THE OCEANIC STANDARD: Office Space Edition

Sustainability solutions for office spaces to reduce single-use plastics!

The Oceanic Global Foundation engages new audiences in ocean conservation. We tap into universal passions to raise awareness for issues impacting our ocean and to provide individual and industry solutions that drive positive change. **The Oceanic Standard** (TOS), is an easy step-by-step guide to adopt sustainable practices that empower consumers and users to make conscious choices while meeting both business and environmental needs.

This is a corporate guide on how to operate a sustainable office space. It is not to be used as a set of rules, but rather research-backed suggestions on how to develop a healthy culture around responsible consumption.

These operational practices should be maintained not only in day-to-day work environment, but also in any external events including conferences, meetings and office gatherings.

The Truth:

- ★ **Every minute, the equivalent of one garbage truck of plastic is dumped into the ocean. 8 million tons of plastic ends up in the ocean every year.** Almost all the plastic ever produced still exists.
- ★ We have an **unnecessary reliance on single-use plastic items** that can be substituted by **affordable and environmentally sustainable alternatives**. Eliminating plastic straws are an easy step toward reducing single-use plastics.
- ★ **By 2050, there may be more plastic than fish in our ocean by weight.**

Step 1: Eliminate Plastic Straws

In the U.S. we use 500 million plastic straws per day. Plastic straws are one of the **top 10 pollutants found on beaches and shorelines and most can't be recycled.**

Solutions:

- ★ Go straw-free or choose a sustainable substitute for plastic straws that fits your budget! Please find the different option on p11 of TOS [Here](#).

MATERIAL OF STRAW	COMPANY	PRICE PER UNIT	ADDITIONAL DETAILS
PAPER STRAWS	AARDVARK STRAWS	SPECIAL BUYING DEAL \$0.02 EACH	3 HOURS IN A COLD DRINK WITHOUT GETTING SOGGY; BRAND YOUR STRAW; DO NOT NEED COMMERCIAL COMPOSTING; DISTRIBUTION PARTNERS GLOBALLY
PAPER STRAWS	GREENMUNCH	7% DISCOUNT FOR ONLINE ORDERS WITH 'OCEANIC' CODE!	FREE SHIPPING FOR U.S. AND CANADA; PACKAGED WITHOUT PLASTIC, EXPECT SMALL RETAIL PACKAGED STRAWS; OFFER 4 SIZES OF STRAWS AND CUSTOM PRINTING AVAILABLE; MANUFACTURED IN CHINA
STEEL STRAWS	STEELYS DRINKWARE	500 STRAWS: \$0.76 EACH + FREIGHT SHIPPING	MADE OF PREMIUM, 18/8 FOOD GRADE STAINLESS STEEL AND HIGHLY REUSABLE; CUSTOM LASER ENGRAVE IMPRINT AVAILABLE; 100% BPA-FREE, LEAD-FREE AND WON'T LEACH CHEMICALS; EASY TO CLEAN (DISHWASHER SAFE) AND RESISTANT TO BACTERIA, RUST AND OXIDATION

*If you are going straw-free (which we recommend), please remember to always have a sustainable alternative onsite for people with disabilities.

**Be cautious of compostable straws. For compostable straws to breakdown, they need to go through an industrial composting process and most cities do not have such facilities in place. If compostable straws do not go through the industrial composting process, they enter the ocean and break down like normal plastic, or end up in a landfill.

- ★ When hosting office events, move to a straw-upon-request policy.

Step 2: Eliminate Single-Use Plastic Bottles

Globally, humans buy a million plastic bottles per minute. 91% of which are not recycled.

Solutions:

- ★ Install water refill stations throughout the office space. When you introduce this initiative, provide all employees with a personalized company cup or water bottle that they can refill.

★ Suggested water refill stations:

- 🛒 [EzH2O](#): Provides a Green Tracker and access to an online Environmental Impact Calculator.
- 🛒 [Flowater](#): Provides special water mixtures for different venues.
- 🛒 [Advance Pure Water](#): Provides bottleless **water coolers** for different industries.
- 🛒 [Lavit](#): Provides still and sparkling purified water on demand, plus the ability to make beverages using Lavit's recyclable capsules.
- 🛒 [Bottle Filling Stations](#) is an online company that matches your company's needs with the best solution for your refill stations. They provide full installation support and a support team within the US.

★ For small offices that are looking for a more affordable option, we recommend:

- 🛒 [Berkey Filters](#)
- 🛒 Ordering refillable glass bottles for an existing dispenser such as [Mountain Valley Spring Water](#).



Some refill stations calculate how many water bottles would be saved. This provides an opportunity for employee engagement by creating a competition between the different office floors on who is saving the most water bottles. A ledger could be created ranking the usage of different floors or companies, incentivizing a behavioral shift towards using reusable bottles. It could be anonymous, but show each floor or company where they stand in the ranking.

★ Suggested beverage refill station:

- 🛒 [Lavit](#) provides a vast selection of beverages that you can make still or sparkling including iced coffees, energy drinks, teas and fruit waters from Lavit's 100% recyclable capsules.

★ Suggested individual refillable water bottles to provide your team with:

- 🛒 [Swell Bottles](#)
- 🛒 [Steelys Drinkware Bottles](#)
- 🛒 [Klean Kanteen Bottles](#)

★ Ideas to promote reusable bottles:

- 🛒 **Encourage coworkers and employees by hosting a contest to see which department can truly "ban the bottle"** and provide the winner with a lunch party or the chance to select the next team building activity.
- 🛒 Host an **annual "bottle free" event**: Establish monthly objectives (eg: everyone uses a bottle for a whole month, save minimum 300 plastic bottles) and keep track of the sectors/departments scores. The departments that obtain the best score at the end of the year can earn an incentive for helping the planet and the company save money.

★ In conference rooms and waiting areas, have refillable jugs instead of single-use bottles.

★ Give guests a refillable branded bottle.

★ If you need a disposable water bottle for waiting areas, conference rooms or for events, switch to aluminum bottles or glass bottles instead of plastic (they have an extremely high recycling rate):

- 🛒 [Green Sheep Water](#)
- 🛒 [Cano Water](#)

Step 3: Eliminate Single-Use Plastic Cups

Invest in reusable cups (with the ability to be branded) such as glass, steel or even plastic.

- ★ In the kitchen, in conference rooms and during office events, provide staff and guests with reusable glassware.
- ★ In the kitchen area, ask all staff to put their glasses away after use.



If you are sourcing single-use plant-based and compostable cups, it is important to have dedicated compost bins onsite and office manager will need to schedule regular pickups as most recycling facilities do not accept plant-based and compostable plastic products. Additionally, most cities do not have an industrial composting facility, which is necessary for plant-based and compostable items to breakdown.

Step 4: Eliminate Coffee Cup Lids

Cups lids are usually made of hard polystyrene, which is not widely recycled.

Solutions:

- ★ Provide reusable porcelain or glass coffee cups in the kitchen and conference areas.
- ★ Incentivize people to bring their own reusable coffee cups that include a lid.

- ★ If you are looking for a take-away, disposable lid option, we suggest the following suppliers:
 - 🛒 [Naeco](#): Offers high-quality paper lids for disposable coffee cups.
 - 🛒 [Butterfly Cup](#): Offers foldable plastic free cup without a lid. Custom branding available.
 - 🛒 [Vegware](#): Offers a 10% discount on all products when entering the code “OCEANIC” at check-out.
 - 🛒 [Keep Cup](#): Offers reusable tempered glass cups, featuring sustainably sourced natural cork.

Step 5: Eliminate Plastic or Plastic Lined Coffee Cups

Americans consume 400 million cups of coffee per day, the equivalent of 146 billion cups of coffee per year, making the U.S. the leading consumer of coffee in the world.

Most paper coffee cups have a plastic (polyethylene) inner lining which is rejected by most paper recycling facilities.

Less than **1% of disposable coffee cups are recycled**.

Solutions:

- ★ Invest in reusable porcelain or glass coffee cups in the kitchen and conference areas.
- ★ Incentivize people to bring their own coffee cups with a lid, provide porcelain or glass coffee cups or give them a company reusable cup at induction.



To catalyze the switch to reusable mugs, have an ugly mug contest: Employees are encouraged to take a picture with their ugly mug at the office, and send in the picture with their name, department and office place. The ugliest mug will win a mystery prize (eg. gift card, free coffee).

- ★ Suggested disposal sustainable coffee cup suppliers:
 - 🛒 [Butterfly Cup](#): Offers foldable plastic free cup without a lid. Custom branding available.
 - 🛒 [Ecoffee Cup](#): Produces reusable cups from bamboo fiber.
 - 🛒 [Vegware](#): Offers a 10% discount on all products when entering the code “OCEANIC” upon check-out.
 - 🛒 [Keep Cup](#): Offers reusable tempered glass cups, featuring sustainably sourced natural cork.

Step 6: Eliminate Coffee Pods and Filters & Single use Tea Bags

Single-portion coffee capsules are not recyclable since they blend together plastic and aluminum. **Most tea bags also contain plastic and are not recyclable.**

Coffee pods **make up a third of the \$22 billion western European coffee market**, with an increase of 8% a year since 2011 in the U.K.

Solutions:

- ★ Suggest and provide loose leaf tea at the office with reusable tea steepers and/or incentivize people to bring their tea and steepers.
 - 🛒 [Frank about Tea](#) provides cradle to cradle tea for offices.
- ★ Switch to buying reusable coffee pods for your coffee machine. Suggested pod vendors include:
 - 🛒 [Ekobrew](#)
 - 🛒 [Waycap](#)
 - 🛒 [Sealpod](#)
 - 🛒 [Mycoffeestar](#)
- ★ Sustainable Basket Coffee Filters:
 - 🛒 [If You Care](#)
- ★ Compostable pods are also available:
 - 🛒 [Halo](#)
 - 🛒 [PurPod100](#)



Nespresso has a recycling program – If sourcing [Nespresso](#) capsules, collect and return used capsules to Nespresso.

Step 7: Eliminate Plastic Utensils

More than **100 million plastic utensils are used by Americans every day**. They can take up to 1,000 years to break down.

Solutions:

- ★ Invest in stainless steel cutlery or incentivize people to bring their own.
- ★ Provide bamboo or reusable options. Make sure that these are a compostable option.
*Avoid 'biodegradable' as these are not normally 'compostable'. Note: Compostable options are only sustainable when home-composted or processed through an industrial composting facility, not mixed in with the general wastestream.
- ★ For disposable cutlery options, suggested vendors include:
 -  [Bambu](#)
 -  [Bio & Chic](#)
 -  [Restaurantware](#)
 -  [Clickat](#)

Step 8: Eliminate Disposable Plastic Plates and Bowls

- ★ **Supply reusable dishware** if you can. This can include metal plates and bowls or porcelain.
- ★ For single-use dishware, please find suggested sustainable suppliers:
 -  [Verterra](#)
 -  [Bio & Chic](#)
 -  [Bambu](#)
 -  [Joanne Hudson Basics](#)
- ★ Introduce employee engagement incentives like “Tupperware Tuesdays” to incentivize people to bring lunch in a reusable container.

Step 9: Implement Sustainable Plastic Bin Bags & Install a Recycling System

- ★ Sustainable bin bag alternatives:
 -  **If You Care**: Offers 100% GMO-free potato starch (which make them stronger than bags made of corn starch!) in a fully compostable composition. 40% less land is required to produce the same amount of starch from these potatoes as from corn. Unlike corn, these potatoes require no irrigation and need only normal rainfall. These bags are all-natural, polyethylene-, and plasticizer-free.
- ★ **Install recycling bins and compost bins in your kitchens** for staff to use. **(Check pages 5 and 6 for more information)**
- ★ **Compost Bins**: The best choice for your office depends on the **amount of waste produced**, the **space available for on-site composting** and the the amount of effort your workplace is willing to dedicate to **maintaining the composting system**.
Please find options for various office sizes and desired commitment levels below:
 -  **The Tumbler and Bin System** method is ideal for a company with **+30 employees** and/or a **large weekly waste pro**
 -  **Pile composting method**: If your company has yard space, consider building an outdoor compost pile.
 -  **YIMBY Rolling Composter**
 -  **Envirocycle**
 -  **Zera Food Recycler**
- ★ **Recycling Bins**: Make sure your team understands the recycling process and how to separate the different items. Labeling the bins and clearly indicating which items go where is crucial. More information on recycling is available on **P32 of TOS**.
 - ★ The average cost of waste has about a 5% turnover, **by recycling you can reduce your costs** at the landfill and of bulk waste removal and put that money back into your business.
 - ★ **Recycling promotes employee satisfaction**. Recycling has a great positive impact on people and also shows customers and clients that you care about the environment.



For more information on recycling, please view the [U.S Waste Management website](#).

Suggested recycling tactics:

 **Waste Wise Products:** Offers recycling bin options for office areas and departments as well as offers the option to personalize recycling signage.



★ Custom-make recycling bins to fit your office needs.



★ Recycling Signage:

★ It is important for employees to know **what and where to recycle to avoid contamination.**

★ Suggested recycling signage:



<p>MIXED RECYCLING</p> <p>Check plastic materials for a recycling mark. NO STYROFOAM</p>	<p>PAPER RECYCLING</p>	<p>LANDFILL</p> <p>Recycle flat. Throw cup away. Recycle lid and sleeve. Throw cup away.</p>
<p>METAL GLASS BOTTLES YOGURT CUPS</p> <p>PLASTIC #1-6 TIN FOIL PLASTIC BAGS</p> <p>RINSE CONTAINERS Rinse empty. Food from containers. & this food makes a treat!</p>	<p>PRINTER PAPER NEWSPAPER FOOD BOXES</p> <p>MAGAZINES THIN CARDBOARD ENVELOPES</p> <p>CORRUGATED CARDBOARD Empty, break down and place next to bin.</p>	<p>FOOD WRAPPERS COFFEE CUPS COFFEE PODS</p> <p>CHIP BAGS SODA CUPS UNEATEN FOOD</p> <p>DID YOU KNOW? Someway, we may be able to compost more waste!</p>

<p>non-recyclable waste food contaminated items chewing gum</p>	<p>mixed recycling paper glass plastic cartons cans cups</p>	<p>food only bread fruit and veg tea bags fish meat</p>
<p>No uncontaminated paper, glass or cans. Non-recyclable waste is incinerated. Where possible, clean items and put them into the mixed recycling bin.</p>	<p>All materials free from food and liquids. Please recycling to correct side. Floor and liquids will spoil other materials, reducing the likelihood of good recycling.</p>	<p>No packaging or containers. Food waste is composted. Food waste is composted. Do not mix food with recyclable bins.</p>

Recycle

please do your part



Step 10: Eliminate Disposable Plastic Soap Dispensers

- ★ Refill your kitchen and bathroom soap dispensers to reduce the plastic packaging waste.

Step 11: Reduce Office Supplies

- ★ Purchase green products such as **staple-less staplers** and pens that can be refilled repeatedly rather than sent to a landfill.
- ★ Purchase products that are made from post-consumer content (materials have been collected back from previous products and remade into new ones) such as paper and plastic products.
 - ★ i.e Paper clips, **staplers and even UPS systems made with post-consumer content.**
- ★ Cut down or eliminate your use of products that there are no green alternatives for, such as rubber bands.
- ★ Use power saving options on printers and copiers.
- ★ Source recycled paper.
- ★ Print double sided on paper + source non-toxic, eco-friendly inks.

Step 12: Implement Additional Sustainable Operating Practices

- 💡 Use energy efficient appliances and light bulbs.
- 📄 Source unbleached and recycled paper towels and toilet paper.
- 🧼 Source non-toxic cleaning products.
- 🍷 Be aware of the food you are ordering for communal areas and the plastic packaging.
- 🍬 Do not have individually wrapped candy or foods in waiting areas, kitchens, desks etc.
- 💰 Switch to digital receipts.

The Oceanic Standard has developed three tiers of badges to recognize those businesses that advocate for sustainability within their industry. Sustainable practices are outlined in [The Oceanic Standard Guide](#).



“Straw-free certified badge” recognizes businesses that eliminate single-use plastic straws.



“Sustainability steward” is awarded to businesses that implement 3 of our suggested sustainable practices.



“Ocean Champion,” is awarded to businesses that implement 6 or more sustainable practices.

Supporting United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:



To find out more, discover the complete guide at www.oceanic.global/oceanic-standard/