

# It is easy being green



'Think global, act local' is the catch-cry of Adelaide-based environmental biologist and author, Jean Cannon. Her new title, *It Is Easy Being Green: Simple Steps To Help Your Business Help The World* outlines simple steps to assist small to medium-sized businesses meet their environmental impact targets.

Jean has more than 20 years of experience in management, quality assurance, government advisory and committee planning. Her company Enviro Action helps businesses to implement practical and cost-effective environmental management systems.

The biggest benefit of a successful EMS is the culture change that takes place. There is better communication and a more aware workforce, but one of the biggest cost savings comes from identifying waste and better ways to manage it.

"Waste is not just the rubbish that is put out. It is excess power used; it is paper used on only one side; it is buying too much of something and wasting part; it is wasting time and wasting effort," Jean says.

"Anything that is not adding value to your product or service is waste. Preventing this waste directly improves your bottom line."

Certification may offer new business opportunities in marketing advantages or access to markets that are closed to non-certified producers.

EMS also projects a good corporate image and builds awareness of a firm's environmental concern amongst employees.

Jean works within the guidelines of the ISO 14001 certification system - the international framework for achieving environmental and financial gains. Jean's consultancy is among the most successful in Australia at helping businesses achieve ISO certification.

The most common myth about implementing ISO 14001 environmental management systems is that it adds an enormous overhead to the business. Many business people also perceive an EMS as just more compliance that isn't essential to running their business.

"Businesses want to do the right thing; what they don't want is to get bogged down in aspects, impacts, objectives, targets and non-conformances. You must keep it simple," Jean says.

"Small businesses need help to get across the initial cost barriers of implementing an EMS. The outcomes are well worth the effort."

A 'one size fits all' approach to environmental management, one that can be handed out to all businesses and industries, isn't possible but there are small steps that all businesses and individuals can take to make a start.


Businesses can take simple steps like:

- Turning off computers, monitors, printers and phone chargers at night to reduce power consumption;
- Turning off lights at night time and having a timer set motion detector switches for passages, store rooms and stairwells;
- Using low energy light globes and minimizing the use of air conditioners and heaters

"The first step needs to be a full review or brainstorm of every activity in the business. Unless you do this properly, you cannot manage all the issues," says Jean.

*It Is Easy Being Green* outlines the simple ways in which businesses of all sizes can effectively implement environmental management systems that can help reduce their environmental impact whilst at the same time increasing productivity, longevity and financial gains.

"The world as we know it is changing and all of us, businesses and individuals alike, need to understand the impact we create and contribute, and better rectify our business procedures to leave as little mark as possible," Jean says.

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