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## How Can Payroll Help Your Company Go Green?

I read a lot of magazines each month. I read mostly fashion magazines, some business ones, and a few more esoteric types. And I enjoy each and every one. But what I have noticed over and over again is that most of these magazines are talking about going green. The magazines themselves may be printed on recycled paper. Or there are articles about how to reduce your carbon footprint. And there are now some interesting new phrases popping up called “repurposing” which to me just means using my old junk instead of throwing it away!

Regardless of the way going green has been represented in popular culture lately it has actually been of concern for most of us for a long period of time. I don't know about you but I have been recycling since college. I have also avoided buying synthetic clothing in favor of natural materials. And we have been getting our produce from local farms as long as I can remember. Does this reduce my carbon footprint? It might. But the point is, I and many people I know have been “going green” for longer than we care to point out!

So how does this affect your business and what does it have to do with payroll?

Many businesses have become interested in reducing their carbon footprint. Not because it is a current trend, but because it actually can be very cost effective. How? Well one example for our company is that we no longer buy new toner cartridges, we use recycled cartridges to produce our checks. This cost us less, is more environmentally friendly and we contribute to this process by sending back our used cartridges so that they can be used again. We also have clients that have gone “paperless”. For these clients we send all of their payroll data in an electronic format instead of printing everything out. This way our clients print only what they need. But what about the employees' checks? Well, this is where payroll can help your company “go green”.

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- 1 -

*The information contained in this article is to be used to provoke a conversation with your financial professional. Any suggestions by the author need to be reviewed by your accountant or financial advisor to make sure that these strategies are appropriate for your financial situation before being implemented.*

One of the first ways that a company can use payroll to reduce a carbon footprint is to use a direct deposit service. When you use a direct deposit service your employees' checks are deposited into their bank accounts on their behalf on payday. How does this reduce a carbon footprint? First, the employees are saving gas by not driving back and forth to the bank. Secondly, paper itself does not need to be used in the pay process. Instead of printing and handing out checks on payday, green employers are using direct deposit and electronically sending pay stubs out to their employees. So fuel and energy are saved from the cutting down trees and milling them into paper. Plus fuel and energy are saved from the transport of that paper. And fuel and energy are saved from printing and delivering the payroll checks to your company. This small thing adds up to a big difference in our use of energy and fuel.

This is all well and good, but what are you saving in expenses by utilizing a direct deposit service? Because after all in my company's example of toner cartridges we not only helped the environment but we saved money by using a recycled product. So here is how you save money:

- You save on productivity costs with your employees. You are not paying for the extra time squeaked in by your staff on payday to drive to the bank, wait in line, and drive back to work on their extended payday lunch breaks.
- You save on delivery costs with your payroll company.
- By electronically delivering your employees' check stubs each pay period instead of mailing the checks out you save on postage each pay.

So what is stopping you from going green with your employees' green? If you are worried that your employees will not go for using direct deposit why not appeal to their environmental consciousness and explain to them how they are helping you go green to be a more responsible employer? After all, now is the time when we can all use this trend to our advantage to save money and be more environmentally responsible.

### **About the author**

*Meg Eynon is the Vice President of The Payroll Factory and has over sixteen years of experience working with businesses to help them come up with simple ways to make their employees' lives easier through the process of producing payroll.*

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- 2 -