

Rethinking Sustainability at Work

How Everyday
Operational Choices Can
Make a Real Impact

EPSON®



A photograph of a modern, multi-story building with a glass facade and a courtyard. The building has a dark metal frame and large windows. The courtyard is filled with tall, golden-brown grasses in the foreground and green plants on the upper levels. The sky is a clear, light blue.

Why Sustainability Often Feels Harder Than It Should

Many businesses want to operate more sustainably, but aren't always sure where to begin or which actions will have the greatest impact. Big sustainability goals may be set, but turning them into everyday actions can feel daunting.

This can make initiatives feel abstract or disconnected from daily tasks and decisions, thereby making sustainability seem much more complex than it is.



Sustainability Is an Operational Issue

However, it's actually everyday operational decisions, not one-time initiatives, that often can have the biggest impact for meeting sustainability goals. Facilities, IT, and operations teams can influence sustainability through choices about equipment and devices, materials and consumables, and how energy is used throughout the day.

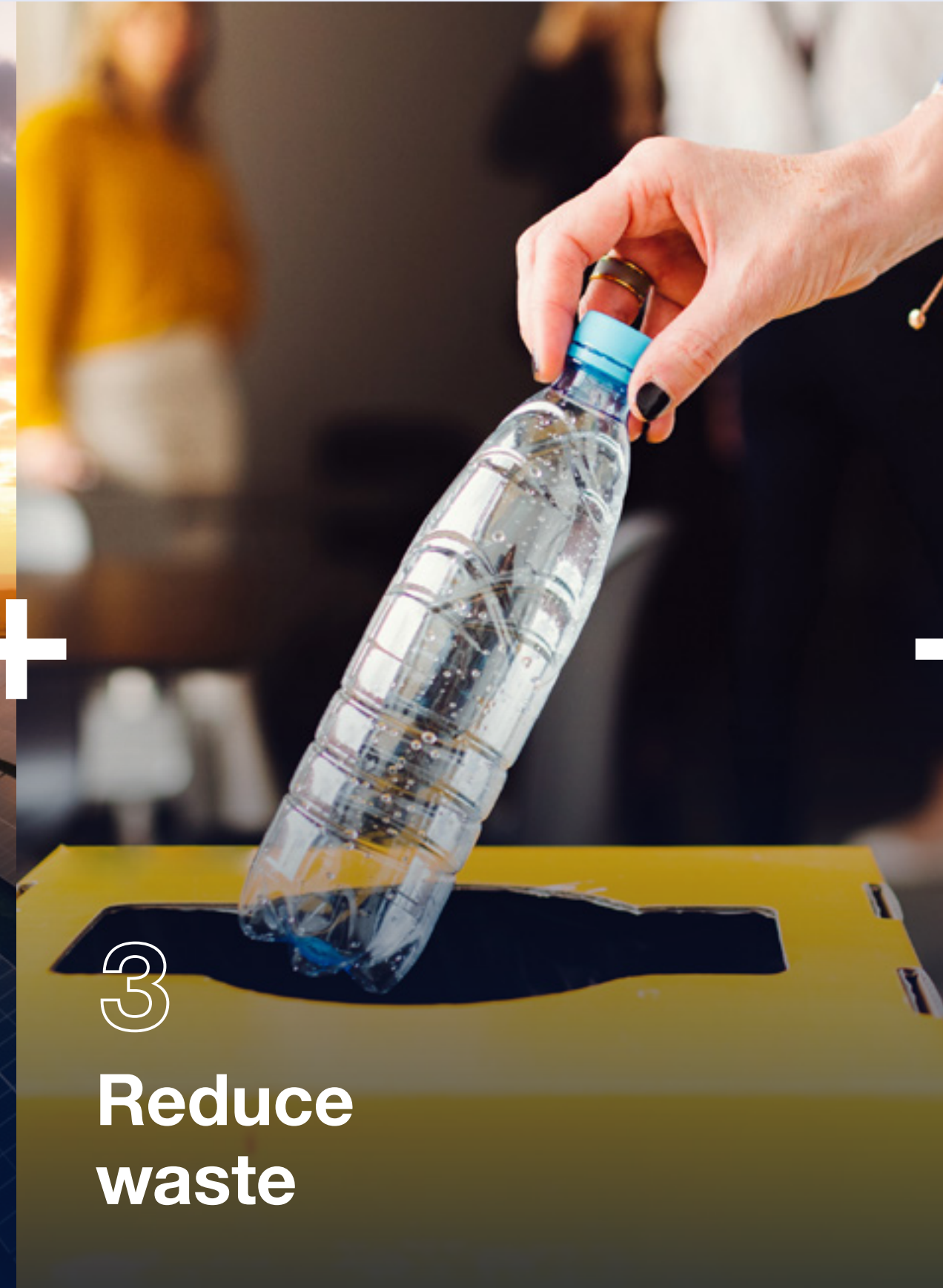
Over time, these decisions can add up – quietly shaping energy use, waste, and environmental impact across an organization.

In short: Sustainability can't be viewed as separate from operations. **It needs to be built into how work gets done, day in and day out.**

How Everyday Decisions Add Up

When repeated across rooms, floors, and facilities, the impact of small operational choices compounds over time. For example, everyday technologies, including printing, influence electricity use, waste, and indoor environmental quality.

When you look at sustainability through this operational lens, **there are four focus areas where organizations can take practical, meaningful action:**



1

Reduce Microplastics

When we think of microplastic pollution, we usually envision oceans and waterways.

But microplastics also exist in everyday indoor environments. In workplaces, they can come from common materials and furnishings — like synthetic carpets, upholstery, and packaging — as well as everyday technologies.

These particles are often invisible, which makes them easy to overlook. However, by knowing more about where microplastics come from, organizations can make informed, practical choices to reduce their exposure.



REDUCE MICROPLASTICS

How Organizations Can Act Today

Reducing microplastics doesn't require sweeping changes. In many cases, it starts with paying closer attention to what's purchased and used across the workplace — and making more informed choices over time.



Look closely at everyday materials

- **Consider where microplastics can show up:**
Flooring, furniture, textiles, and packaging can all shed microplastics.
- **Choose for longevity:**
Favor durable materials designed to last and wear less.



Consider how the equipment operates

- **Pay attention to mechanics:**
Many technologies rely on heat or mechanical friction, a key driver of microplastics. For example, laser printers that emit plastic particles during high-volume printing, artificial turf fields in hot climates, or microfiber cloths in high-heat environments (like the dryer) can all shed synthetic fabrics.
- **Look for lower-impact options:**
Lower-heat, lower-friction technologies can help reduce impact over time.

Many of the same operational choices that reduce microplastics — especially those related to heat and friction — also play a role in energy efficiency. →



Key questions to ask vendors about materials:

- 1 **Start with composition:**
What materials are used — and how do they break down with use?
- 2 **Explore alternatives:**
Are there alternatives that reduce mechanical friction and therefore particulate release?
- 3 **Think full lifecycle:**
How is environmental impact considered across the full lifecycle of materials and equipment?



2

Reduce Energy Consumption

Discussions about energy efficiency often focus on how buildings are constructed, and lighting and HVAC systems.

But the devices and equipment used every day also contribute significantly to energy consumption, especially in offices where shared technologies can run for long hours — even when they aren't actively being used.

This is especially true for heat-based processes — for example, certain types of printing.

REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION

How Organizations Can Reduce Energy Use

Reducing energy use often comes down to how equipment operates in the real world, not just how it performs on paper. By looking at usage patterns, technology and machines that require heat, and day-to-day operating needs, organizations can identify practical opportunities to improve energy efficiency over time.



Key questions to ask vendors about usage patterns:

- 1 Understand how it operates:** Does this equipment rely on a high temperature (and therefore creates heat) to operate or reset between tasks?
- 2 Consider frequency:** How often does it warm up or cool down during a typical day?
- 3 Plan for real environments:** What does energy use look like in stop-and-start environments like offices?



Look beyond peak energy ratings

- **Remember, consumption is continuous:** It doesn't just happen during active use.
- **Account for the in-between:** Idle, standby, and warm-up energy can contribute to daily consumption.
- **Evaluate across the full day:** Look at how equipment behaves throughout the entire workday, not just at full capacity.



Choose technologies designed to operate at a lower temperature

- **Start with the basics:** The higher the operating temperature, the more energy required.
- **Look for lower-heat performance:** Technologies that operate at a lower temperature (and with less heat) can reduce electricity consumption immediately.



Match equipment to real-world use

- **Avoid overbuying:** Don't choose overpowered devices that exceed your organization's actual needs.
- **Right-size for efficiency:** Right-sizing equipment can reduce both energy use and operating costs.
- **Improve efficiency over time:** Consider consolidating or upgrading outdated equipment to improve overall efficiency.

Many of the same energy-related choices — especially those involving consumables and maintenance — also influence how much waste organizations generate over time. →

3

Reduce Waste

Waste in the workplace isn't always obvious.

Beyond paper, a significant amount comes from equipment, consumables, packaging, and replacement parts (such as cleaning equipment, stationery supplies, external hard drives, etc.). And when technologies have short lifespans or require frequent maintenance, replacement — and waste — becomes routine. Reducing waste starts with understanding what's being replaced, how often, and why.



REDUCE WASTE

How to Choose Longevity Over Waste

A major source of workplace waste comes from how often supplies, components, and equipment need to be replaced. Items like filters, packaging, batteries, and replacement parts can add up quickly. The goal is to reduce repeat replacement by choosing solutions built to last.



Look at the big picture

- **Track what gets replaced most often:** Frequent replacement of supplies and parts increases waste over time.
- **Choose solutions designed to use fewer consumables:** Look for equipment and systems that require either fewer consumables or less frequent replacements parts.
- **Think long-term, not just upfront:** Consider total usage over months and years, not just immediate needs.



Consider long-term durability over short-term savings

- **Be cautious of low upfront costs:** They can sometimes lead to higher long-term waste.
- **Reduce replacement cycles:** Durable, well-designed equipment can reduce the need to swap parts, replace units, or re-order supplies as often.
- **Align with cost-efficiency goals:** Longer service life often aligns with both sustainability and cost-efficiency goals.



Reduce waste through smart planning

- **Match equipment to real usage needs:** Choose capabilities that fit actual day-to-day demand, rather than purchasing “just in case.”
- **Avoid unnecessary deployment:** Avoid overbuying or deploying unnecessary devices across teams and sites.
- **Plan refresh cycles thoughtfully:** Consolidate where it makes sense, and time upgrades carefully to reduce unnecessary disposal and replacement.

Reducing waste is often about choosing fewer, longer-lasting, and better-designed solutions — and planning for their full lifecycle. →



Key questions to ask about durability and maintenance:

- 1 **Understand service requirements:**
How often does this equipment require replacement parts or servicing?
- 2 **Clarify what's required to keep it running:**
What consumables are needed — such as filters, cartridges, liners, or other components — and how frequently are they replaced?
- 3 **Look at waste over the full lifecycle:**
How does maintenance impact waste over the life of the product?



4

Plan for End-of-Life Responsibly

Sustainability decisions start the minute you decide to acquire something new.

So start to think about the end-of-life options before purchasing new equipment.

End of life — reuse, recycling, or responsible disposal — can have a major impact on waste, cost, *and* overall environmental footprint. Not only does proactive end-of-life planning support sustainability goals, but it can also improve long-term operational efficiency.

PLAN FOR END-OF-LIFE RESPONSIBLY

Plan Ahead to Reduce Waste Later

End-of-life planning is easiest when it's done early. By considering disposal, reuse, and recycling upfront (and aligning teams around what happens next), organizations can reduce waste later and make smarter operational decisions over time.



Key questions to ask vendors about usage patterns:

- 1 Clarify take-back options:**
What options exist for recycling or take-back at the end of its life?
- 2 Check material transparency:**
Are materials clearly labeled?
- 3 Understand support services:**
How does the vendor support responsible disposal or refurbishment?



Plan end-of-life early

- **Build it into procurement:**
Consider disposal, reuse, or recycling at the time of purchase.
- **Choose for longevity and responsibility:**
Look for equipment designed with longevity and responsible end-of-life in mind.
- **Avoid dead ends:** Avoid solutions that make reuse or recycling difficult.



Extend useful life wherever possible

- **Maintain to last longer:**
Regular maintenance can extend equipment lifespan.
- **Upgrade with intention:**
Upgrading strategically can reduce unnecessary replacement.
- **Redeploy when possible:**
Reuse or redeploy equipment when it makes sense.



Align end-of-life planning with operational goals

- **Coordinate across teams:**
Loop in facilities, IT, and sustainability teams.
- **Track replacement cycles:**
Take note of equipment age and replacement cycles.

Organizations that think holistically about sustainability — from materials and energy to waste and end-of-life — are better equipped to make informed choices across all areas of operation. →



Put Sustainability Principles to Work

Sustainability principles only create impact when they're applied to real operational decisions. The same questions organizations ask about materials, energy, waste, and end-of-life apply across many everyday functions and systems. One of the most common — and often overlooked — places these principles come together is printing, a core function in many workplaces.

How to Make More Sustainable Printing Choices

Printing is an essential part of work in many organizations, and considering sustainability often means printing less — when possible — and smarter.

When printing:

- Favor technologies that consume less energy.
- Reduce reliance on frequent consumable replacement.
- Choose durable equipment designed for longer service life.
- Plan printing decisions as part of broader operational sustainability goals.

In many cases, the biggest difference comes down to whether printing technologies are designed to reduce energy use, materials, and waste at the source, rather than compensating for inefficiencies later.





What Sustainability-Driven Design Looks Like

Most business printers and copiers operating today use laser printing technology and users of this technology are not aware of what happens inside of their device, or that there is a more sustainable way to print.

With a decades-long commitment to sustainability, Epson has embedded environmental responsibility into its printer and copier product design. Epson Business Inkjet printers, powered by PrecisionCore® heat-free technology, reflect a design philosophy focused on addressing sustainability through how printing is engineered, not after-the-fact workarounds, and without sacrificing productivity and reliability. These printers are high-speed machines that draw from technology that has been used in some of the most demanding industrial and commercial applications.

As part of this commitment, Epson made the industry-leading decision to discontinue selling laser printers and focus on inkjet innovation designed with sustainability in mind from the start.

There's a Better Way to Print

For all Epson business inkjet printers, PrecisionCore® Heat-Free technology is designed to help reduce energy use, materials, and waste at the source by eliminating the need for heat in the printing process.



Toner-free

Epson business inkjet printers use zero plastic toner powder.



No warm-up required

Heat-Free technology doesn't require warm-up, supporting fast first page out.



Low power consumption

Save up to 86% on electricity with Epson WorkForce Enterprise AM-C5000 vs. color laser printers.*



Less waste

Produce up to 53% less waste with Epson WorkForce Enterprise AM-C5000 vs. color laser printers.*

* Keypoint Intelligence Comparative Waste Generation and User Intervention Performance Evaluation, Epson WorkForce Enterprise AM-C5000 Inkjet Device vs. Competitive Laser Devices 2023. Based on product and refill ink bottle sales in North America from 2015 to June 2021. Specifications and terms are subject to change without notice.

Your Sustainability Checklist

Use this checklist to start applying these sustainability principles to your everyday operational decisions.

Tip:
Look for technologies designed to reduce energy use, materials, and waste **at the source**, not compensate for inefficiencies later.

Reducing microplastics

Reduce microplastics by improving filtration, choosing low-shedding materials, and opting for toner-free printing.

- **Inventory common sources:** Identify high-shed materials in your workplace (flooring, furniture, textiles, packaging).
- **Build vendor questions into purchasing:** Ask how materials break down with real use, not just lab specs.
- **Evaluate equipment mechanics:** Flag technologies that have a high operating temperature — and require more energy — or rely on heat. (For example, laser printers that emit plastic particles during high-volume printing.) Explore lower-impact alternatives.

Improving energy efficiency

Save energy by using heat-free and LED technology, efficient HVAC, and power-smart equipment. Avoid equipment that has a high operating temperature (and uses heat) or requires long warm-up cycles.

- **Evaluate full-day usage:** Review energy use beyond peak ratings, including how devices behave throughout the workday.
- **Account for “in-between” energy:** Include idle, standby, and warm-up energy in stop-and-start office environments.
- **Ask about heat:** Confirm whether or not a technology requires heat to operate.

Reducing waste

Reduce landfill waste through recycling, reusing, bulk purchasing, and avoiding high-waste devices.

- **Track replacement drivers:** Identify what gets replaced most often (consumables, parts, packaging, components) and why.
- **Choose for durability:** Prioritize longer-life solutions that reduce replacement cycles and maintenance needs.
- **Right-size and consolidate:** Match equipment to real usage needs and avoid deploying unnecessary devices.

Planning for end-of-life responsibly

Ensure equipment and furniture are reused, refurbished, or recycled responsibly through certified programs and nonprofits.

- **Plan end-of-life at procurement:** Confirm reuse, recycling, and disposal options before purchase, not after.
- **Confirm take-back and recycling support:** Ask vendors about take-back, recycling, refurbishment, and reporting options.
- **Align teams and timelines:** Coordinate facilities, IT, and sustainability teams on refresh cycles and disposal plans.



Ready to Rethink Your Printing?

Learn how Epson can support your sustainability goals

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