

# Source Reduction-Savings for Business



More and more businesses, large and small, are realizing that source reduction can mean a big payoff in reduced waste and costs. For example, a small newspaper in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, the *Herald Review*, has reduced its waste by almost 30,000 pounds annually, which saves over \$18,000 per year. Everyone joins in to reduce waste, from reporters switching to narrow-ruled notebooks to save paper, to photographers saving film by planning the number of exposures they need before shooting.

- ✚ In the office, people reuse mailing labels, rebuild toner cartridges for computer printers, and print on both sides of the paper. A ceramics packaging firm has even been found to purchase the paper left over from the printing process. This “waste exchange” benefits both companies. The newspaper also has found ways to reuse waste ink, film-developing chemicals, and paste-up sheets. These innovative ideas reduce both the amount and the toxicity of the company’s wastes.
- ✚ A large furniture manufacturer, Herman Miller, Inc. (HMI) of Zeeland, Michigan, has reaped savings of \$1.4 million annually through waste prevention. It devised packaging containers that can be reused 80 to 100 times and that are made from recycled detergent and milk containers.
- ✚ Another approach HMI uses is cartonless packaging. This means just placing cardboard edges on the corners of some furniture and wrapping the furniture with plastic film rather than boxing it. The cardboard edges are reused and the plastic film is recycled. This practice has saved HMI \$250,000 a year for one type of product. In addition to internal efforts, HMI cosponsors an annual waste exchange fair for other businesses to share information and materials. Workshops are also held to educate attendees about waste prevention. The first fair brought together over 300 people and was so successful that attendance tripled at the second one.

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