

Recycled Office Furniture:

Good for the Environment,
Good for Your Business



Recycling paper, glass, aluminum cans and other everyday products is now standard practice in homes and offices across America. But many consumers are unaware that office furniture is also a recyclable product.

Think about it. The basic structure of most office furniture has a long life span. Instead of wearing out, it is often replaced because it has simply "uglied out." Color, fabric and other elements typically become worn or outdated over time. In the past, an office face-lift or a new color scheme meant old furnishings were given a life sentence in storage or doomed to the dumpster.

Not any more. Today, remanufacturing and refurbishing diverts worn office furniture out of the solid waste stream and back into the consumer market by restoring it to "like new" condition.

Worn parts are replaced, cabinets are repainted, desktops are refinished or replaced, and chairs and panels are reupholstered. Furniture destined for the dump is instead looking, and functioning, like new again.

And there are other benefits as well. Not only does remanufactured furniture look as good and perform as well as new office furniture, but you can expect an average savings of 30 to 50 percent just by buying recycled! What benefits the environment can also benefit your bottomline!

Today's recycled or remanufactured office furniture offers an attractive alternative to purchasing new product. Whether you're supplying your own furniture for refurbishing or purchasing "new" remanufactured furniture, you can be assured of a quality product, a cost-effective product and most importantly, an environmentally-conscience product. What's good for the environment really is good for your business!



What do the following have in common?

Newspaper

Glass Bottles

Aluminum Cans

Office Furniture

Answer:

Each of these products can be recycled and reused!

Re-manufacturing just 40
cubicles diverts one
tractor-trailer load of furniture
from a landfill.

What is Recycled Office Furniture?

As a consumer, you have several options available to you when selecting office furniture. Here's a brief description of the different types of product on the market:

Recycled Office Furniture

Recycled office furniture is a term often used for any post-consumer office furniture that has been diverted out of the solid waste stream and back into the market with or without repairs. This includes remanufactured, refurbished, and re-used (as-is/used) office furniture, all of which are being "used again."

Remanufactured Office Furniture

Remanufactured office furniture is recycled office furniture that has had value added to the product. Products are completely disassembled, parts are inspected, cleaned, repaired or replaced, reassembled and refinished to "like new" conditions, and returned to the market for sale.

Refurbished Office Furniture

Refurbished office furniture is recycled office furniture that has had value added to the product by being "touched-up" or cosmetically improved and then returned to the market for sale.

Reused Office Furniture

Reused, "used," or "as-is" office furniture is recycled office furniture that has been returned to the market for sale without repair or improvement to its appearance.

New Office Furniture

New office furniture is new furniture purchased from the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) for resale by your company. It is composed entirely of OEM parts. The parts are made mostly of raw materials (natural resources) that have not been used before, although some manufacturers' components may have recycled content.



Furniture Recycling: Good for Your Business

Today, remanufactured office furniture is becoming the furniture of choice for more and more companies because it outperforms new furniture in several ways. Let's look at the benefits:

Design Benefits

Many consumers are amazed at the options available when choosing recycled and remanufactured furniture. Instead of a pre-determined selection of colors, fabrics and finishes, remanufactured office furniture allows

you and your designer complete creative freedom. If you can design it, your furniture recycler/remanufacturer can help you achieve it!

Redecorating your office but keeping the furniture? It's easy to update your existing furniture to match any design and color scheme. Remanufactured furniture offers an almost limitless range of colors, fabrics, finishes and laminates to give you and your design team the ultimate flexibility. Instead of looking as good as new, you'll have furniture that looks even better than new! Your vendor can also help you mix and match new and recycled furniture with your current furnishings to provide additional design options.



Starting from scratch? No problem! You don't have to supply furniture to buy recycled furniture. Your vendor can help advise you as to what types of furnishings will work best in your workplace and show you a range of options. The best part about working with an office furniture recycler/remanufacturer is that there are no "cookie cutter" solutions. They'll take into account your needs, your budget and your taste to create just the look you're after.

If you're looking for a custom work environment, recycled and remanufactured furniture is for you!

Most office furniture has a long life. Color, fabric and other outdated elements can be changed to match any office interior as well as other furnishings.

Cost Benefits

We've established that recycled office furniture can look as good as new (or even better!) but what about cost? After all, office furniture represents a major investment for most companies.

We're happy to report that buying recycled is an excellent cost-cutting opportunity, generally offering a savings of 30 to 50 percent off the cost of new furniture. And, if you're supplying your own furniture the savings can be even more dramatic. First of all, you won't have to pay expensive storage or waste disposal fees for your outdated furniture. Secondly, you may have additional depreciation advantages to extending the life of your existing furnishings instead of incurring an additional capital expenditure.

Recycling also sets a great example for your company's employees. It shows that your firm is managing the company's assets wisely and sends the message that conservation and waste reduction is an important corporate goal. Refurbishing your current furniture can be an attractive decision financially as well as aesthetically!

Furniture Recycling: Good for the Environment

As we all look for new ways to reduce, reuse and recycle, here are just a few examples of how buying recycled office furniture helps our environment:

Conserving Natural Resources

Because fewer raw materials are used, remanufacturing conserves energy and natural resources. Office furniture recycling extends the lives of resources already in circulation such as wood, aluminum, steel, plastics and fiber, using them over and over to the fullest extent possible. Industry experts estimate that for each pound of natural resources used in remanufacturing, five to nine pounds of original materials are conserved!



Solid Waste Stream Reduction

By recycling office furniture, the products as well as the natural resources are diverted from the solid waste stream. The EPA has estimated that approximately 3 million tons of office furniture and furnishings are discarded each year. For example, fabrics in panel systems tend to wear out and the colors become outdated. By remanufacturing, the fabrics can be replaced and the office furniture returned to the market for a second life. Recycling results in fewer products filling up limited landfill space.

Customers can expect to save from 30% to 50% on their office furniture costs by choosing recycled furniture.

Energy Conservation

Recycling office furniture conserves labor and manufacturing energy. The amount of labor and energy required to alter an existing product during remanufacturing is 85 to 95 percent less than that required to manufacture a new product. And, since much of the product has already been manufactured, remanufacturing saves the enormous amounts of energy required for production, especially when metals are kept out of the resmelting process.

Air Pollution

Recycling reduces the pollution caused by the manufacturing process. Carbon monoxide (CO), carbon dioxide (CO₂), sulfur oxides (SO_x), nitrous oxides (NO_x), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and particulate matter are all reduced by recycling office furniture. By reducing the amounts of these contaminants, global warming, acid rain, photochemical smog, and other forms of air pollution are also reduced.

Furniture Recycling Common Myths and Misconceptions

Don't let concerns about product quality or costs keep you from considering recycled and remanufactured

furniture as an option. Here are common misconceptions and the facts you need to make an informed decision:

MYTH: Recycled products are inferior in quality.

Since remanufacturing and refurbishing restore worn office furniture to "like new" condition, recycled office furniture is equal to new furniture in quality and reliability. Many remanufacturers include warranties on recycled office furniture, guaranteeing customers a quality product.

MYTH: Recycled products are hard to find.

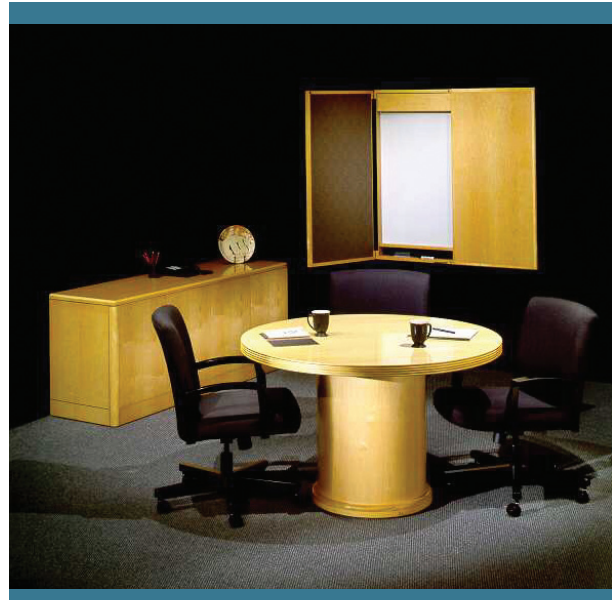
Recycled office furniture is often more readily available than new because, for the most part, the product is already made. This enables the recycler to provide short lead times, usually delivering product in less than four weeks.

MYTH: Recycled products cost more.

Prices of recycled office furniture typically range from 30 to 50 percent less than new furniture! The conservation of energy and natural resources means that office furniture can be remanufactured for less than it costs to build new product. This savings is passed along to the consumer.

MYTH: Remanufacturing is not recycling.

Actually, remanufacturing is the ultimate form of recycling! Remanufacturing conserves natural resources, reduces the amount of product sent to the landfill, and saves manufacturing and labor energy while adding value to the post-consumer product. Remanufactured office furniture is made to function and look like a new product-at a lower cost!



Office Furniture Buyer's Checklist

Here are a few helpful hints to make sure you're getting the best office furniture value for your company:

Ask Questions

- What are their quality standards?
- Can they meet your job specifications? (timeframe, budget, job size, any special requirements)
- Is there a warranty?

Take a Tour

- Visit their facility and see where the work will be done.
- Ask to see what inventory they have in stock.
- Ask to see finished products and visit a recently installed project.

Check References

- How happy are past customers with both the products and services provided?
- Would they select this vendor again?

Other Factors to Consider

- Do they use clone or Original Equipment Manufacturer's (OEM) parts?
- How do they manage their inventory?
- Do they do the work in-house or is it out-sourced?
- Does the support staff seem professional and easy to work with?
- Is the company financially stable?
- Are they members of their industry trade association, the Office Furniture Recyclers Forum?

Before Committing

- Follow sound business practices-make sure all pricing, warranties, job specifications and delivery dates are in writing.



Industry experts estimate that for each pound of natural resources used in remanufacturing, five to nine pounds of original materials are conserved!

For more information on our services and products, feel free to contact one of our representatives.

Envirotech Office Systems

8025 Dixie Rd.
Brampton, Ontario
Canada, L6T 3V1

Tel. 1.905.793.7799

Fax 1.905.793.4666

1.800.411.6585

www.envirotechoffice.com