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The power of going green

Birmingham Business Journal - by [Beth Donahue](#) Staff

Green is a color. The perception of which is evoked by light having a spectrum dominated by energy. It is not a primary color, but is created out of a mixture of yellow and blue. Although this may be the scientific definition of the word, these days, green has a very different meaning.

Green living is an uncomfortable and overwhelming concept for some of us. The idea that it's difficult or expensive to be green has seemed to be the attitude of many of us here in Birmingham. The idea and lifestyle change of going green has swept throughout the United States lately – and now we're seeing it sweep throughout our city.

We're all feeling the pressure to go green – whether in our homes, our social circles or at our office. And it's always been perceived that it's time consuming and financially draining. In fact, there are many out there who feel it doesn't make a difference at all. It seems that even with all the education and hype, there are many of us who still don't take this challenge seriously. And I think it has a lot to do with the fact that it seems out of reach – “not easy.”

I've learned over the past couple of years, since moving back to Birmingham from New York (where green reigns), that our city is actually much more evolved than many of us even realize. Birmingham's environmental resources are becoming more abundant, and it is easy to make even the smallest change.

When I first came to the Birmingham Business Journal, we were beginning the planning process for our Going Green editorial sections and events. We felt that since we were behind such an effort, our office and business should become more green in the process.

Because I was so interested in green living, I volunteered to begin the BBJ's “green team.” Made up of five other BBJ employees, our team is making real strides in beginning green initiatives around the office.

Our green team is going to start small – as everyone should – with an inexpensive and surprisingly easy paper, tin can and technological recycling program. We hope to initiate many other green practices, including biodegradable cleaning products and kitchen supplies, as well as energy-efficient light bulbs, computer accessories and office equipment.

Next week, we're kicking off our green initiative with a Green Up day. It's the day that we will begin our office recycling program by cleaning up and decluttering the entire office – recycling everything along the way.

With the help of the Green Resource Center for Alabama, the Alabama Environmental Council and an e-cycling service called Technical Knockout, we're going to kick off our office's recycling program with a bang. For a minimal fee, the Alabama Environmental Council offers a paper recycling service for local businesses. Technical Knockout offers a low or no cost e-cycling service and the Green Resource Center for Alabama offers an abundance of education, local knowledge and information for anyone interested in going green.

There are many unknowns one may face when adjusting to a greener lifestyle – whether at home or at the office. Where do you start? How do you get there? How inconvenient is it going to be? How much money is this going to cost? In my opinion, these reservations are no longer excuses to ignore the issues. With our city's abundance in information and resources, anyone can leave a lighter footprint. Although we aren't all lucky enough to work in LEED-certified buildings, we all have the option to be more ecological and responsible for our city and ultimately, our world.

These days, there is a direct link between a strong economy and a clean environment. Businesses focusing on these initiative are growing and thriving, and I believe that those of us who don't act on this new knowledge of our world will be left behind.

Although we all can't afford to outfit our homes and offices with the greenest of materials, we can certainly start small and we should all do what we can. You don't have to give up AC or pedal-power your appliances to have a valuable impact on the world around you. You can start small and effectively, easy and inexpensively. Yes, easy!

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