



Wu Orthodontics & Mulcahy Dentistry

Started Composting: December 2009

We sat down with Connie Lyssand, Office Manager at Mulcahy Family Dentistry, to learn more about their zero waste practices.

When people think about business composting, they don't usually think about the dentist's office. What can you compost at a dentist's office?

Connie Lyssand: There is actually quite a lot! For us, it's typically cotton swabs, cotton pads and paper towels.

Many people are reluctant to start compost collection at their offices because they are afraid it will smell. But looking at this

office, it is spotless and I don't smell anything.

CL: People think it's like composting at home where you only take out the trash before pick-up. We've never had that problem here because our compost is taken out often.

Do you have any tips for businesses thinking about starting the compost services?

CL: Evaluate your waste—you'll realize it's easier than it looks! Also get in touch with GreenWaste for guidance.

Mulcahy Family Dentistry
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www.mulcahyfamilydentistry.com

The first green-certified orthodontic office in Santa Clara County, Wu Orthodontics makes trips to the orthodontist fun. Keep your teeth in top shape and you'll not only walk out with a WUnderful smile, but maybe also a free iPod! We catch up with Lisa Ma Wu, Practice Relations Coordinator at Wu Orthodontics.

Why was it important for you to work towards becoming green certified?

Lisa Ma Wu: We already have the basics of zero waste such as digital charts, digital x-rays and energy efficient equipment so it was an important next step to get our community involved. We motivate our patients with Damon Dollars for sustainable behaviors such as bringing their own toothbrush and biking to their appointments. Patients can redeem their dollars for gift cards and iPods.

Do you have any tips for businesses thinking about starting the compost services?

LMW: Talk to other businesses that have gone through the process. Get in contact with GreenWaste and the Bay Area Business Program because they are really helpful.

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Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati

Started Composting: August 2009

When staff at legal powerhouse Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati (WSGR) aren't working on ground breaking court cases, they're devising out-of-the-box strategies to reduce their environmental impact. We sat down with Kristin Ashby, Property Manager, and Gail McFall, Community Affairs Manager, at WSGR to learn how they made their workplace more sustainable.

When did WSGR start compost collection and how did you go about it?

Kristin Ashby: We started planning a couple of months before we rolled out the composting program in August 2009. We worked with the various departments to develop a plan that would make it as easy as possible for them to start composting.

Gail McFall: We also created our own internal marketing material, such as personalized signage with pictures of items we typically have around.

Many business owners say they're too busy to compost. Attorneys are pretty busy people. How did you help your staff adapt to the changes?

KA: I think the key is to make it as easy as possible. We have bins located within a few feet of most people's offices. Training and buy-in from upper management were very important.

GM: Ongoing communication is also important to keep it fresh in everyone's minds.

WSGR is now at an 85 percent waste diversion rate. Do you think you can reach zero?

KA: I sure hope so! With our continuing

evolution of the program and more education I can see us meeting the deadline. Since we started the compost collection service we've decreased the volume of our garbage by 40 percent.

Tell me about your garbage-free offices!

KA: We encourage staff to get rid of the trash can under their desk. One: it means you aren't tempted to throw recyclable and compostable waste into the garbage. Two: it's one less plastic bag that goes to the landfill. About 100 of the 950 employees at our office have committed to not having a garbage can in their workspace.

Do you have any tips for businesses thinking about starting compost collection?

KA: Utilize your on-site resources and ask the folks at GreenWaste to help you. Don't be afraid to start small and then expand your program as you see fit.

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