

Case study – Converga



In pursuit of the paperless office

The paperless office promised by futurists in 1975 has not eventuated. Worse, the worldwide use of office paper more than doubled between 1980 and 2000. However, while the paperless office is still a myth, the 'less-paper' office is here, and thriving.

The convenience of digital technologies, combined with increasing awareness about the environment, has led many organisations to print less and press send more. This is where Converga works, in the front line of convincing some of Australia's largest organisations that there is a better way than paper.

Converga has developed many innovative sustainability services for its clients, such as showing how digital invoicing can save 100 tonnes of carbon emissions for every one million paper invoices. Converga processes more than 100 million invoices each year.

Converga began operations in 1994 as a mailroom service provider. As demand for information management services exploded, the company diversified into business process outsourcing. Today, Converga specialises in document and records management, scanning and imaging, digital mail, and paperless accounts payable.

The company has more than 650 staff in Australia and conducts its main operations through established technology centres in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra, and new centres in Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. ►

In brief

Digital business solutions provider, Converga, is increasing its commitment to help build sustainable practices into client organisations including helping one client save 400,000 sheets of paper a year.

Converga was the first business in NSW to achieve Gold Partner status in the Sustainability Advantage Program. The company's efforts have returned great results:

- estimated paper saving of 753,900 pages – equal to 1500 reams or about 4500 kilograms
- consolidated courier runs and transferred others to its own vehicles to reduce CO₂ emissions from 4.36 tonnes to 2.13 tonnes per vehicle – a saving of 31,800 litres of fuel, 279,300 kilometres or \$12,500
- encouraged video conferencing over air travel to reduce domestic flights by 198 trips – equal to 12 tonnes of CO₂ emissions, 71,430 kilometres or about \$79,200
- reduced its waste to landfill from four tonnes in 2008-09 to three tonnes in 2009-10
- reduced mileage claims by 9150 kilometres to cut CO₂ emissions by 2.48 tonnes and to save \$6800.



- 'It is our business to rationalise, re-engineer and automate the workflow processes in organisations,' says Converga CEO, Brian Roberts. 'We also help our clients reduce their impact on the environment through our pursuit of the truly paperless office.'

Converga joined the Sustainability Advantage Program in 2008. The company wanted to simultaneously improve its own environmental management practices and help clients with theirs. Today, Converga offers ways to enhance waste disposal, measure greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce its clients' carbon footprint.

'We spend a lot of time thinking about how we can help our customers reduce their effect on the environment, not only our effect on the environment,' says Converga Quality Manager Lye Goh. 'The Sustainability Advantage Program guided us along the way. We knew what we wanted to do. We just were not certain how to get there.'

The focus of Converga's core business is supporting the flow of paper-based and digital information in a business, with a focus on paper to digital document conversion. Converga's solutions include digital mail, electronic records management systems, forms automation, and paperless accounts payable.

Converga's paperless accounts payable service recognises both paper and electronic invoices and incorporates them into a single, instantly-accessible system. This allows organisations to not only eliminate paper invoices, but also reduce operating expenses by at least 25 per cent.

This paperless solution helped one Converga client reduce the amount of paper invoices it receives by 400,000 sheets a year.

In the past three years Converga consolidated some courier runs and transferred others from contractors to its own vehicles to cut carbon dioxide emissions from 4.36 tonnes to 2.13 tonnes – a saving of 31,842 litres of fuel, 279,317 kilometres or \$12,448.

The company encouraged video conferencing to reduce domestic flights by 198 trips. This saved 71,429 kilometres of air travel, 12 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions, or about \$79,200. It also reduced mileage claims by 9150 kilometres and saved 2.48 tonnes of CO₂ emissions or \$6862.

Another highlight for Converga was hiring experts for a comparative life cycle analysis of paper versus digital images to discover the environmental cost of a physical document. What Converga now knows about the true costs of transporting a paper invoice – and how to save such costs – it is gold to clients seeking to move to a paperless environment.

'To Converga, being sustainable means thinking about tomorrow,' says CEO Brian Roberts. 'We believe our commitment to environmental sustainability will ensure we continue to make significant inroads and progress on this critical issue.'

Your next step

To find out how your business can join the Sustainability Advantage Program, contact the team:

Email sustainbus@environment.nsw.gov.au
Call 02 8837 6000
Visit environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainbus/sustainabilityadvantage.htm