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'Green IT' Not a Priority To Most IT Managers

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By Jennifer Zaino

In fact, most companies (60%) have not initiated any “green” (environmental sustainability) initiatives, either business-wide or within any major departments.

In two-thirds of those companies that have done so, IT does play a contributing role. That still leaves over a quarter of the companies where IT is not a part of the green initiatives. In some companies, that may be attributed to the fact that management may simply not see IT as a major contributor to their environmental issues or solutions. IT sustainability efforts may not be considered central to a manufacturing facility’s green initiative to reduce chemical usage and waste, for example, says Gambill.

“In other cases, the environmental impact of IT may just be out of sight and therefore out of mind, as far as corporate and IT management alike are concerned,” he says. “For example, energy costs are often another department’s responsibility (e.g., facilities management) and are dispersed throughout a business. IT purchasing does not always consider the impact of equipment design and manufacturing on a company’s environmental footprint, and even companies that recycle other materials aggressively may not think to recycle their IT equipment.”

The most basic observation from this report, though, is that IT’s involvement in green initiatives probably doesn’t reflect what IT is thinking about as much as what IT’s bosses are thinking about, and what they are asking of IT, he says.

For smaller organizations where IT does want to help the effort to create a more energy- and cost-efficient infrastructure — whether it’s part of a plan to go green or simply to control energy costs — part of the hurdle may be just around understanding where to start. [Jessica Vreeswijk](#), founder of [Green ITTools](#), recently spoke to that issue during a webinar sponsored by [Strategic Sustainability Consulting](#), a firm that specializes in helping under-resourced organizations implement sustainable solutions.

“There’s lots of information on the Internet, but it’s hard to consolidate it,” says Vreeswijk, whose company provides a guide to help IT professionals figure out where to start, and a methodology to meet project management and continuous improvement standards around these efforts. Vreeswijk identifies five phases to successful projects, starting with chartering the project based on a realistic assessment of scope and resources that can be dedicated to the effort; assessing current energy consumption levels (one of the tools in the [GreenITTools](#) kit provides spreadsheets to assess inventory, and energy consumption across equipment and employees); implementation of practices; communication about the effort and goals within the organization; and progress measurement.

On her recommended list of technologies to implement to control energy consumption are upgrading power supplies to newer models, which can reach 80%-plus efficiency; consolidating peripheral devices (for example, using multi-function machines vs. separate printers and scanners and faxes); and optimizing the server room set-up so that servers are not right next to the air conditioning (which will ramp up as it feels the heat from that equipment). But the “single most powerful thing [for controlling energy consumption] is network power management,” she said, such as remotely starting up and shutting down workstations when they’re not in use.