

VantagePoint

VOLUME 3

INSIGHTS FOR BETTER INFORMED BUYING

Embracing Change

Discovering Different Dynamics • Evolving with Confidence

STAPLES Advantage

contents

Change is inevitable.
How we deal with it determines our success.
Volume 3 of Vantage Point discusses some
of the major shifts which are re-shaping the
way companies operate.

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Embracing change

Change is an ever-present fact of business life. Organisations of every kind need to constantly reassess their positions to cope with advancing technology, evolving workforce demands, and the increasing importance of sustainability.

New challenges and new opportunities often go hand-in-hand. Success comes from embracing the positivity that change can bring. For example, allowing new working practices which satisfy employees' preferences, rather than blindly enforcing old rules, can be beneficial to everyone. Meanwhile, sustainability, that ever-present catalyst for change, takes on fresh appeal when focussing on the long-term business benefits it delivers, instead of viewing it as a burden on budgets.

At Staples Advantage we offer products and services which meet the changing demands presented by both the Millennial generation and everybody who desires a more mobile working lifestyle. By making these tools available, employers are better positioned to attract a beneficial diversity of employees.

This issue of Vantage Point takes an in-depth look at what we can do to leverage the best from our current—and future—workforce, via thoughtful change supported by educated procurement decisions.

Enjoy reading,
Hervé Liboureau

Senior Vice President
Head of Staples Advantage Europe

The 2015 Staples Workplace Index

Cited throughout this issue of Vantage Point, this survey was commissioned by Staples Advantage to gain insights into what motivates—and demotivates—today's office workforce. Designed in conjunction with Dan Schawbel and conducted by Redshift Research during May 2015, it questioned 2,603 office workers in the USA and Canada.

Change for the better

The 2015 Staples Workplace Index recommended four key tactics for achieving an effective workplace culture:

Prevent burnout

Ensure people aren't routinely working excessive hours. Reducing communication overload can be a big help.

Build trust

Offer flexible working practices and ensure people feel comfortable about taking breaks when they need to.

Build loyalty

Invest in good quality, up-to-date tools and technology. Demonstrate willingness to provide employees with the best tools for getting their jobs done.

Use space well

Provide different types of spaces for performing different tasks. Allow people to work in the type of space where they're most comfortable.





Discovering different dynamics

The resources that keep your business engine pumping are changing all the time.

Your people want different ways of working. The technology you use offers ever-expanding possibilities. Sustainability has become a defining factor in almost every choice you make. The very framework of how businesses operate is being rocked by social and legislative forces. Future success depends on understanding the changes going on around us and venturing into the opportunities they bring.



Could a more flexible attitude to where and when your work gets done result in better quality and higher productivity?

Tearing up the timetable

Evolving customer expectations, closer international cooperation and increasing pressures on the workforce mean that the traditional 9 to 5 day is fast losing its efficacy for optimally productive operation. At the same time, organisations are experiencing greater demand to have resources available outside of standard office hours. Greater flexibility in how, when and where employees work is the key to keeping everybody satisfied and using their time to best effect.

In today's fast-paced society with its multitude of demands, the traditional office-bound 8-hour shift is less and less compatible with the lives of a business's customers, associates and employees. Parents need work to fit around caring for their children. Commuters,

forced by ever-increasing property prices to live further from their workplaces, need travel time (and cost) to be minimised. And everybody needs time-out at various points to attend to social and family events, household, administrative or healthcare matters.

Life doesn't happen in 8-hour windows, and conflicting work and personal demands are distracting and detrimental to work performance. Getting the best value from each individual's time means adopting a smarter approach to how it's used.

Flexibility in when and where employees do their work is the key. If they are allowed and enabled to work according to their own daily rhythms, they are likely to focus better and

deliver a higher return. This same flexibility may also provide a natural solution for making your organisation's resources available outside 'normal' hours.

Flexi-time and telecommuting are two solutions that can optimise productivity, foster a happier workforce and facilitate extended operational hours. However, many organisations are hesitant to allow these. Barriers include everything from discomfort with changing traditional practices and trusting employees' honesty to concerns about data security, the cost of related IT investment and possession of suitable knowledge to use it. If these, or other reasons are preventing your company from loosening the 9 to 5 chains, it's worth taking a look at what's at stake.



Quality productivity

An employee being at their desk for their allocated 8 hours doesn't necessarily equate to 8 hours of quality productivity. If personal issues need to be resolved, minds are distracted. And as discussed in Volume 2 of Vantage Point, frequent breaks and physical activity are absolute necessities for optimising brainpower.

Yet it's still too often the case whereby "being seen to be busy" is paramount and lack of full-time presence is frowned upon. These kinds of cultures create tension and lead to a breakdown of trust between staff and management. As negative feelings on both sides turn to disengagement with the job and the organisation, productivity is diminished and people eventually leave, necessitating the expensive process of recruiting and training new staff.

Of course, the work still needs to be done and everybody needs to pull their weight. But can better value per employee be achieved by allowing them to define their own timetables? Would entrusting employees to divide and allocate their weekly hours in whichever way suits them best actually result in better quality and volume of work? Could giving them greater responsibility for their output effectively nurture higher engagement?

Preserving time and energy

How much time and energy are your people wasting on travelling when they could just as well get the job done from home, or elsewhere? Long physical commutes are a drain on employee performance (and bank balance) and, most likely, large contributors to carbon emissions. They take up many hours which could be used more productively on work, rest and recreation. Excessive travel time disrupts the work-life balance which is necessary for good health, and a pre-requisite for the Millennial generation workforce (see The rise of the Millennials in this issue). Those working for companies who champion green credentials may even view fuel-devouring journeys as contradictory to that ethos. Which is a thought they might share in the public domain.

Portable technology, fast internet connections and security-conscious software mean a great deal of work can be done perfectly well outside of the office environment. And thanks to a myriad of web-meeting services, people can collaborate without having to be in the same place at the same time.

So it's worth asking, do you really need to be looking over everyone's shoulders to know they're getting the job done? Is it actually always necessary for people to meet in the same physical space when meetings can so easily be conducted online, with screen-sharing facilities?

Mutual trust

If you're used to being able to see exactly where your employees are and what they're doing throughout their paid-for hours, dispensing with this may feel like an uncomfortable transition.

Allowing flexibility via flexi-hours and telecommuting takes trust. But trust is part and parcel of a good workplace culture. Trust is the root of engagement, commitment and teamwork.

And it works both ways. Employees are more likely to act responsibly if their employers free them to show what they can do. But it's up to the employer to make the first move, as well as setting clear parameters with regard to expectations. Deliverables need to be defined so both parties feel comfortable with the arrangement.

A flexible working environment may mean a more extensive flow of people coming and going. Which increases the importance of keeping tabs on who's in your premises.

Getting time on your side

By offering flexible working options and ensuring employees always feel free to take breaks as needed, employers can seize a range of opportunities to increase engagement, productivity and quality. Capitalising on each individual's "best" hours also extends the ability to offer service outside the traditional working day and reach across different time zones.



70% of workers who classed themselves as "happy in their jobs" reported some degree of workplace flexibility in the form of telecommuting and/or flexi-time.



Of those who reported themselves to be unhappy, only half had access to any form of flexibility. Nearly 40% of these specifically identified flexibility as a factor that would improve their job satisfaction.

Considering that happy employees result in higher productivity, better customer satisfaction and higher staff retention, it's clear that working practice flexibility is essential for profitability.

Source: Staples Workplace Index 2015

Extending the office safely and securely

The physical office environment is typically a protective space when it comes to health, safety and security.

Responsible employers need to extend that protection to telecommuters, so those working remotely can still perform their tasks efficiently, comfortably, safely and securely. This means being mindful of everything from ergonomic accessories to reliable technology and data security.

Carrying it safely:



Height of a backpack should extend approximately 5 cm below shoulder blades to waist level, or slightly below.



Take your laptop bag off if standing for a long period of time. Extended carrying time increases pressure on the spine.



Always wear a backpack on both shoulders so that the weight is evenly distributed.



When packing a laptop bag, pack heaviest objects closest to the body, to ensure even weight distribution.



Protecting people

Ergonomically designed laptop bags reduce strains due to bad posture.

Kensington offers a good choice of backpacks, roller bags, toppers and hand-held business bags, specifically developed to satisfy the needs of mobile workers.



Protecting hardware

Laptops are a prime target for thieves, but a good lock makes it very difficult for anyone other than the rightful owner to walk away with them. With over 30 years' experience, **Kensington** lead the world in laptop locks which guard both your valuable hardware.



Protecting data

Data security is a major concern for both employers and mobile workers. While implementation of suitable software and practices forms the basis for a secure mobile environment, physical accessories such as privacy screens and laptop locks provide effective additional protection.

Privacy cases from **Leitz** and display filters from **3M** limit a screen's angle of vision, making it very hard for prying eyes to get a look in.

Protecting premises

A flexible working environment may mean a more extensive flow of people coming and going. Which increases the importance of keeping tabs on who's on your premises.

Duracard ID 300 makes it easy to create professional quality plastic ID cards and security passes, directly from your reception desk.





Rise of the Millennials

Along with the energy and freshness of youth, every new generation introduces new ideas and ideals. But as the Millennials take their turn in challenging their predecessors' way of working, the differences are greater than ever before.

Millennials have come of age as digital natives in a world shaped by financial crisis. They are the first generation to enter the workforce with a better grip on a key business tool—technology—than their more senior colleagues. And, realising that job security is an unlikely safety net in the world they're inheriting, they are the first generation to put personal requirements above employer demands.

Looking after No. 1

Having grown up in a society where family life was often compromised by parents' dedication to work, and where hardworking people still lost their jobs due to recession, Millennials tend to be more focussed on social needs. They place very high importance on work-life balance and see the portability of their CV as much more advantageous than building loyalty within an individual organisation.

With an instinct for self-preservation, Millennials are making themselves individually valuable in order to disarm employers' abilities to call the shots. They are building personal brands which facilitate mobility to move jobs as and when the need or desire arises. This places the most capable and talented among them in a powerful position when it comes to employment.



The pendulum of power

Insufficient job opportunities for educated Millennials entering the workforce means that a great many talented individuals—nearly three quarters of those questioned in a recent PwC survey—considered themselves as having compromised to get in to work. When economic conditions improve, these people are highly likely to seek out more desirable employment. Those with the right skills and talent will be in high demand, so they will be harder to attract and hold on to.

Employers therefore need to think now about providing environments that keep Millennials happy. Flexible working, inclusive attitudes, collaborative practices, non-rigid management structures and full access to information all figure highly on the agenda.

Workplace dynamics

Millennials have grown up in the age of social media and gaming and are used to being able to affect the world as equals. From wherever they happen to be, at any time they choose. They thrive off a management style that meets their needs, not one which dictates. Millennials don't want a boss, they want a coach or mentor. While batting ideas around with their own peer group is conducive to open and uninhibited discussion, Millennials also want to have direct contact with top management to directly air their opinions and receive immediate feedback.

Appetite for progress

Millennials' familiarity with information bombardment and instant reaction to their input makes them hungry for learning and recognition. They can easily get bored and often need to be constantly challenged. Employers who provide Millennials with sufficient attention in the form of regular feedback, together with opportunities for rapid progression and a varied and interesting career, will benefit from optimistic, engaged, team players with an abundance of enthusiasm and an uncanny ability to multi-task.

Rewarding investment

Even though Millennial loyalty is a hard thing to come by, employers who give this generation what they really want can gain better returns on their investment in them. Although Millennials are primarily drawn to stay in a job through positive relationships and experiences, they also share the same desire for financial rewards, security and diversity as their predecessors.

According to Jessie Newburn, a generational-dynamics expert and president at Stellium Communications in Columbia, MD (USA), "Millennials are very loyal to companies, but they have to be loyal to a company that's loyal to them. Millennials want an agreement, which is, 'I will give you my intelligence, my time, my commitment, my capacity, but you have to be committed to my development and to my learning.'"

Millennials are also worth nurturing for their propensity to share opinion. If they are impressed with the way an organisation treats them, they will be fast to advocate it, which can in turn attract more suitable talent. This word-of-mouth recruitment method is extremely valuable among this generation who, having grown up being bombarded by advertising, tend to be skeptical about promotional material of any kind. Whether buying products and services or considering employment, Millennials are more likely to listen to their friends than to be affected by marketing or public relations material.

Sustainable benefits

Sustainability is the buzzword on everybody's lips. But what does sustainability actually mean to your organisation? Is it considered a burden or an advantage?

Sustainability may have been introduced into organisations for many different reasons. From being the very essence of a company's existence to nothing more than a necessity for legal compliance. From a heartfelt management initiative to a realisation that it makes a good PR story. Whatever the original motivation, predicted changes in government legislation combined with fast-evolving public opinion mean sustainability has moved on from being a matter of preference or obligation. It has become a defining factor in an organisation's commercial viability.

With everything from consumer perception and staff motivation to investor confidence at stake, future success will become inextricably linked to how smartly businesses adapt to this new world order and capitalise on the opportunities it brings.

Where next?

Depending on current levels of adoption, transition to becoming a more holistically sustainable operation may require more effort from some than others. Highly visible initiatives such as waste reduction, recycling and energy conservation have become the norm. Sustainability for the future means integrating it within every aspect of an organisation's existence. From choices in everyday office supplies and energy-efficient machines to fixtures and fittings, cleaning chemicals and even the materials buildings are made of.

The good news is that ongoing innovation in every one of these areas means sustainable integration is ever cheaper and easier to achieve. With quality and performance that matches, and even exceeds, the standards we demand.

Flagship examples of basic everyday consumables which have evolved to step up to the sustainability challenge include **Energizer's EcoAdvanced** batteries—the world's first AA battery incorporating recycled material—and **Scotch® Magic™ Tape** which, with 53% bio-based content, is the world's greenest sticky tape. **BIC** and **Pritt** respectively house their **EColutions** and **ECOMfort Roller** correction tapes in bio-plastic shells, while the iconic **Pritt Stick** has improved its adhesive power by replacing petroleum-based PVP with natural starch and sugar obtained from potatoes. Likewise **Edding**, a company that made its very first markers refillable over 50 years ago, now use at least 90% renewable resources to manufacture their **Ecoline** range of highlighters and markers.

If these office stalwarts, familiar over many decades, can evolve successfully and intuitively to inhabit our more sustainable world, then our organisations should be able to do so too.

Similarly, behind-the-scenes maintenance has undergone positive transformation with the increased availability of eco-friendly cleaning chemicals such as those in the **SURE™** range offered by **Diversey**, which are plant-based and



Pritt ECOMfort Roller and BIC/Wite-Out® Ecolutions® correction tape

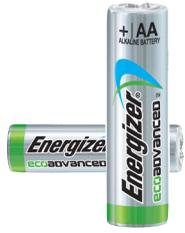
Improved eco-friendliness, with focus on recycled and renewable materials.



100% biodegradable. Such products exemplify the business benefits of acting sustainably, as their absence of hazardous artificial chemicals means they are significantly less likely to be detrimental to the health of those who use them. The result is happier, healthier, cleaning staff who are more appreciative and respectful of your organisation and therefore likely to do a better job. Which in turn makes an impression on everyone who uses your premises.

Sustainability has become a defining factor in an organisation's commercial viability

These day-to-day examples are living proof that what we thought was impossible yesterday is now embedded in our future. Wherever your organisation currently sits in the evolution of sustainable operation, and whatever its motivation for doing so, it's worth taking stock of how a more eco-conscious approach will impact its future. Reassuringly, various studies confirm a whole range of beneficial consequences which indicate acting sustainably isn't just better for the planet, but better for business on many levels.



Energizer EcoAdvanced AA and AAA batteries

The world's first high performance batteries made with 4% recycled content coming from old batteries. In addition to requiring less virgin material, they are also Energizer's longest-lasting alkaline batteries, which is a double thumbs up for sustainability.



Scotch® Magic™ Tape

Awarded a Vinçotte OK biobased Ecolabel in recognition of its strong sustainability credentials, this re-invented stalwart comprises of a plant-based adhesive applied to backing made of cellulose acetate, which is manufactured from wood pulp. The result is a product that contains 53% bio-based content, which is unique in the tape market.



SURE™ cleaning chemicals range

Proving that professional results can go hand-in-hand with being safe for people and kind to the environment, SURE™ has created cleaning chemicals derived from by-products of the agro-food industry. Originating from sugar beet, maize, straw bran, wheat bran and coconut, they contain no artificial dyes, perfumes, quats, chlorine, phosphates or oxide compounds.



Edding Ecoline markers and highlighters

Thanks to continuous research and development, all products in the EcoLine series have caps and barrels which are made from at least 90% renewable resources or recycled materials.



Pritt glue stick

Now made from 90% natural ingredients (including water), free of solvents.

How business benefits from acting sustainably

Enhanced brand image and increased competitive advantage

Consumer research by *The Natural Marketing Institute* has found that consumers are 58% more likely to buy a company's products or services when they know the company is mindful of its impact on the environment and society. It also shows that consumers are willing to spend up to 20% more on environmentally sound products and services.

The Natural Marketing Institute is a strategic consulting partner which operates in 30 countries.

Increased productivity and reduced costs

Implementation of more sustainable business practices leads to greater operational efficiency. Better conservation and use of resources results in more streamlined operation and decreased costs.

Improved financial and investment opportunities

Financial and investment analysts have recognised that sustainability plans for energy efficiency and reduction of environmental impact are an important company evaluator criterion. A Goldman Sachs study revealed companies in six industries considered leaders in environmental social and governance policies to have outperformed the general stock. Another study based on CFO Research, which surveyed 175 top finance executives, showed that more than half believe their companies will increase revenue through strong sustainability initiatives.

Being prepared for future legislation and costs

Ernst and Young's report *The Top 10 Business Risks for Business* highlights the necessity to be prepared for tighter environmental regulations and increased energy costs. As soon as 2020, it is estimated that companies will legally be required to reduce carbon emissions by 25%. And for this figure to rise to anything between 50–80% by 2050. This will affect both availability and costs of energy which are expected to double within the next 10 years.

Improved recruitment and retention of quality employees

Employees increasingly want to work with companies who are 'doing the right thing' environmentally and socially. Adecco, an international HR company, found that 52% of employed adults feel their companies should do more about the environment. In an age where workforce demands are taking more and more precedence in the ability to attain and hold on to good staff, sustainability credentials and practices have become an underpinning factor in determining who a company is made of and how loyal and ethical those people are to the organisation. According to a Global Study of Business Ethics by the American Management Association, one of the top five internal practices for ensuring an ethical corporate culture is developing corporate social responsibility programmes.

Maintaining your grip on technology

The emerging trend for *Bring-Your-Own-Device* is challenging the way organisations need to think when it comes to mobile IT. Staples Advantage talks to independent IT consultant Paul Macdonald about how to ride the BYOD wave to everyone's advantage.



About Paul Macdonald

Paul Macdonald is an IT innovation architect who guides organisations in IT infrastructure choices, devising bespoke solutions to deliver tangible business benefits via his company Beautiful Technology.

Consumer ownership of the latest and greatest tech devices is fast becoming the norm, rather than the exception. As a result, company-owned IT is starting to lag behind that of its employees. This is fuelling a drive for *Bring-Your-Own-Device* (BYOD) initiatives, whereby employees opt to use their own laptops, tablets and phones to carry out company work.

Allowing such practices may appear to be a double-edged sword. While cost savings seem an obvious corporate advantage, for some this is intuitively outweighed by concerns about security. However, these security issues are easily mitigated through installation of software on the employees' devices.

"Virtual desktop solutions such as VMware Horizon Air, which delivers cloud-hosted applications without the cost of managing your own IT infrastructure, create a ring-fenced environment within a laptop which becomes the only area able to interact with the organisation's network. This prevents transmission of any viruses or malware which may be on the employees' machine to the enterprise system. A user's own laptop can thereby be as secure as one provided by the organisation, without impacting any other software they have installed."

Workforce driven demand

Some may wonder why employees would choose to use their own equipment for work, rather than be provided with it by their employer for free. This is something generally only desired by people who already own devices which are more advanced than those the company offers. Naturally, they don't want to take a downgrade from the level of IT sophistication they're used to. It's a phenomenon which is becoming increasingly commonplace, and employers need to take note.

"New models with faster speeds and more exciting capabilities are coming on to the market all the time, and at increasingly affordable prices. To Millennials and tech-savvy members of older generations, ownership of up-to-date tech feels like second nature. They frequently trade up, similarly to the way some people do with cars."

"Meanwhile, companies are typically slower to invest in equipment upgrades, leaving more and more employees ahead of the game. If these people are required to use inferior machines to do their jobs, they can get demoralised and even lose respect for their employer."

The 2015 Staples Workplace Index confirms this last point, having identified that inadequate and outmoded technology is linked to decreased staff satisfaction, demotivation and higher churn.

Productivity can also be strongly impacted by equipment preference. *"Employers are wise to facilitate BYOD as people get more done when using equipment they're familiar with and enjoy, especially if they have a strong preference for either Windows or Apple operating systems. And of course the more advanced the machine, the faster and more efficiently the work gets done."*



Compact connectivity

The sleek, compact designs of many laptops and 2-in-1 convertibles often leave little space for connectivity ports. **Kensington's Universal Docking Station** restores ability to plug in multiple peripherals at once by turning one USB port into six.

A level playing field

The case for BYOD raises the question of what to do for employees who still need, or prefer, to be provided with company equipment. And indeed, how to handle things if BYOD still feels like an uncomfortable scenario. It's important not to create an environment that feels discriminatory either way. Those who own better equipment than the company's don't want to be dragged down if they are forced to use it. And those who need the company to provide them with IT devices don't want to feel like second-class citizens to their better-equipped BYOD colleagues.

"The more appealing a company's own equipment, the keener all employees will be to use it. One way of achieving this is to utilise the passion of IT-savvy employees by asking for their recommendations."

Mobilising the ability to print

The presence of many different kinds of devices in the office might raise questions about what happens when people need to print. Can all these machines easily be integrated into the printing network? The answer is yes, with different solutions being better suited for different operational scenarios.

For large organisations with expansive premises and even multiple locations, 'Follow You' printing solutions enable printing from laptops, tablets or phones to any printer in the enterprise network.

"Solutions such as the one offered by Nuance Equitrac work by installing a universal print driver on each of the users' devices, which is more efficient than making a separate installation for each printer. When it's time to print, the user can choose whichever printer is most conveniently located. Because 'Follow You' requires them to either swipe an ID card or key in a password at the printer to release the print job, there's no risk of documents lying around which never get collected, either because they were forgotten about or sent to a printer the user couldn't find. This aids both security and sustainability."



For small to medium sized enterprises with less extensive networks, printers such as those in **HP's OfficeJet Pro X-Series** are a great choice because of their ePrint system, which can connect directly with every type of laptop, tablet or phone without going via a router. The HP OfficeJet Pro X-Series also puts interesting spin on office printing, as its new generation inkjet technology is actually faster, higher quality and more cost-effective than traditional laser-based solutions which have dominated professional environments for so long. And with up to 50% lower energy consumption than professional grade laser printers, they're great news for sustainability too.

Evolving with confidence

Successfully adapting with the times means finding the right blend between old and new.

The introduction of new practices, new equipment and new products should always be done with consideration for what's already in place. Change doesn't have to mean all-change. It's about recognising what's worth keeping and what's outmoded, and working out how to harmoniously integrate the choices you make. Innovations in familiar products prove that improvement doesn't have to be disruptive, but can be achieved through focussed adaptation.





Integrating generations



BOOMERS
Born 1946-1964



GEN X
Born 1965-1976



MILLENNIAL
Born 1977-1997



GEN 2020
After 1997

Given that an individual's working life may span 50 years, organisations are likely to consist of three generations of employees. That means understanding, capitalising on and effectively integrating a broad variation of underpinning attributes.

Today's workforce is comprised of Baby Boomers (born 1946 to 1964), Generation X (born early 1960s to early 1980s) and Millennials—formerly referred to as Generation Y—(generally born early 1980s to early 2000s). While exact boundaries are loosely defined, these categorisations are often used to identify different drivers and preferences.

The youngest of this trio, the Millennials (see 'The rise of the Millennials'), are still entering the workforce and will soon be its majority component. Currently roughly aged between 12 and 32, they are everything from raw trainees to young management. As the generation who will influence how tomorrow's workplace will operate, smooth and successful company evolution means incorporating their view on the world into today's office environment.

However, this needs to be done without disregarding everybody else. While Millennials represent the gateway to the future, a balanced organisation still depends on the experience and breadth of opinion its Generation X and Baby Boomer workforce brings to the table. The Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) recently published a report titled *Untapped talent: Can over-50s bridge the leadership skills gap?*, which exposed an impending skills shortage in senior and management positions, caused by the failure of many organisations to recognise the value of Baby Boomers and to satisfy their needs.

Amid the frenzied excitement about the future fuelled by fast-paced technological progress, a culture of thinking the over-50s can't or don't want to keep up has evolved. While some may struggle to adapt to new practices, Baby Boomers and older Generation X workers provide knowledge, experience and level-headedness which only comes with age. And they, as much as anybody else, still want to develop and progress into more senior leadership roles. Yet many organisations are starving them of such opportunities, even though they score higher than younger workers for occupation-specific knowledge and skills (85%) and understanding of customers (78%).

Retaining irreplaceable experience

Side-lining the Boomers and older Gen X-ers effectively eliminates years of invaluable experience. So how can an organisation hold on to these experienced and knowledgeable staff? Keep training them, don't overlook them for internal promotions and devise flexible ways of ensuring that they can contribute. Instead of losing people to retirement, develop a transitional approach which enables their experience to be retained and shared within the organisation. This can be achieved via flexible working practices (as described in 'Tearing up the timetable') and things like 50+ apprenticeships and other options for special contractors and people who have built portfolio careers.

“Experience is very often invisible until it is lost to the organisation when someone retires, leaves or their post becomes redundant. Many organisations have suffered with a large-scale loss of more experienced and older workers resulting in a massive loss of collective organisational memory and knowledge.”

— ‘Attract Grow Engage. Optimising the Talents of an Age-diverse Workforce’
An Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) and Ashridge Business School Guide

Finding the balance

Successful company evolution comes from effective interchange and sharing between all three generations, to capitalise on a balanced fusion of everything each has to offer. A 2013 survey by EY (formerly Ernst & Young) reported Millennials to be tech-savvy, but not great team players. Gen X-ers to be entrepreneurial-thinking, but ranking low on executive presence. And Boomers to be loyal and team players, but not so good at adapting. Many large firms are currently studying the social and behavioural patterns of Millennials (see ‘Rise of the Millennials’) in order to devise programmes that successfully integrate them with the older generations. The goal is to achieve reciprocal understanding and provide an environment that makes everybody feel comfortable.

Bridging the technology gap

The Staples Workplace Index 2015 survey revealed some interesting differences in different generations’ attitudes to technology.

Millennials showed themselves to be less worried about technology infrastructure than Baby Boomers, with 71% of Millennials valuing a fast/reliable internet connection at 8+ to 10 for importance, compared to 85% of Baby Boomers. This may be because Millennials take “effective” technology for granted whereas Boomers strongly recall times when it was significantly less reliable and are therefore more fearful of failure.

Similarly, only 50% of Millennials valued being provided with an up-to-date phone at 8+ to 10, compared to 66% of Baby Boomers. This could be because Millennials are more likely to own their own up-to-date smartphone, so see it as the norm and aren’t as dependent on their employer providing them with one.

Workspace preferences

It probably comes as no surprise to hear that younger workers have a stronger preference for open plan workspaces than their older colleagues who perfected their craft in more formal, enclosed environments. However, this is still an individual matter and, according to the Staples Workplace Index 2015 survey, there’s no overwhelming case for labelling different generations as needing different set-ups. Keeping everybody at their productive best means providing a mixture of closed offices and open plan spaces, possibly via a hybrid environment.

Preferences are slightly more marked when it comes to being creative, with incremental generational differences over traditional vs non-traditional working environments. The survey showed 48% of Millennials as feeling most creative in public spaces such as cafes, lounge areas and even outdoors, compared to 38% of Generation X and 27% of Baby Boomers. So although youth is more at ease being creative in public and older workers more strongly prefer some kind of formal office environment, it’s clearly beneficial to allow both.

Millennials expressed greatest interest in having nap rooms and recreational facilities (such as table-tennis) available. While Boomers put the highest importance on comfort such as clean, well-stocked toilet facilities and comfortable furniture. In all these examples, no group’s bias was vastly significant. It seems some generational differences aren’t so great after all.

Personal preferences

Good washroom hygiene isn’t just something that matters to Baby Boomers. It’s important for all. Clean, tidy, well-stocked toilet facilities reflect your organisation’s attentiveness to wellbeing and sustainability. For everyone who works there, and everyone who visits.

KATRIN

Katrin washroom products include

toilet tissue, soap and hand towels with innovative Katrin Inclusive dispensing solutions. Contrasting colours and braille text make Katrin Inclusive dispensers easy to locate and full-face push surfaces make them effortless to operate. While efficient, reliable functionality keeps consumption to a minimum. High-absorbency tissues mean fewer sheets are needed and have positive effects for economy and hygiene. Minimized paper consumption also lowers the impact on the environment.

Kleenex

Airflex* paper hand towels by **Kleenex** offer superior strength

and absorbency which means fewer towels are used. Their secret lies in having specially spread-out fibres which create plenty of space to draw water in. As well as increasing functionality, this design means less material is needed to manufacture each sheet. A sustainability win-win! Available in multi-fold and rolls, suitable for use in **Kimberly-Clark Aquarius** dispensers.

The enduring power of paper

Our digitally dominated world was predicted to spell the end for paper. Yet this traditional medium plays so many valuable roles that it's not going to disappear any time soon.

The notion of the paperless office was first raised back in 1975 in an article by Vincent E. Giuliano in *Business Week* called 'The Office of the Future', in which he predicted most record-handling would be electronic by 1990. While this has come to fruition, a little later than he thought, the paperless office itself still remains a long way from reality.

A recent survey, *Work Smart, Work Mobile*, commissioned by **Leitz** showed the average worker in the USA, Europe and Australia still generates around 10,000 sheets of A4 annually. Of 800 mobile workers questioned across Europe, 94% said they use paper pads for notetaking. Only 6% said they never use paper. Similarly, recent research of 14,000 consumers across 5 European countries conducted by **Oxford Notebooks** showed that paper notebooks remain key tools for taking notes, ideating and time management, with 86% of office professionals reporting use of at least one paper-based stationery product in the performance of their daily professional duties.

There are a number of reasons for this, all of which point back to the fact we are humans, not machines. Printed hard copies are easier on the eye than computer screens, and information presented in this way is easier for our minds to absorb. Writing things down with pen and paper, rather than typing, requires a closer connection between brain and words. And writing is generally more convenient when on-the-go, as well as for drawing pictures and diagrams. It seems that notebooks are here to stay and our printers aren't going to become redundant any time soon.

It is easier to take in detail reading from paper than from a screen.

A

I find screens quicker to search than paper.

B

I prefer to make amends physically on paper than on screen.

C

Paper helps people think

Many people prefer to use pen and paper as their primary thinking tool—and with good reason. Studies among audiences as diverse as junior school children, university students and aging Baby Boomers show that writing, rather than typing, produces more thoughtful, coherent pieces, and increases mental retention of the information captured.

While digital screens are best for rapid browsing and swift assimilation, printed hard copies are better when close understanding and concentration are called for. If you want people to get a grasp on the content contained in lengthy documents, it's better to print them out.

Having said this, preferences and aptitude for digital mediums in thinking are likely to increase in the future, as generations of people who were entirely digitally schooled come in to the workforce.

DISAGREE

AGREE

48%

52%

40%

60%

46%

54%

53%

47%

'OLD TECHNOLOGY' IN A MOBILE WORLD

As an article in **Wired** magazine in 2014 put it, "Maybe it's time to start thinking of paper and screens another way: not as an old technology and its inevitable replacement, but as different and complementary interfaces, each stimulating particular modes of thinking."

A **Leitz** research panel of business people certainly confirms this. At the moment, findings suggest that the issue is in balance—52% believe it is easier to take in detail when reading from paper than the screen. Similarly, 54% prefer to make amends physically on paper.

For now, there is clearly a role for both, and personal preferences will vary. Instead of assuming that smart or mobile workers will want paper removed from their lives, it's perhaps better to think about how the format can be adapted to meet their needs.

D

Making notes on a computer or tablet during a meeting can be seen as not paying attention.

Paper is better on-the-fly

The instant ability to jot down notes, wherever you happen to be, without having to first power-up a device and open a document, and later save it in a suitable place, makes pen and paper ultimately more convenient than digital technology in ad-hoc situations.

This is even more the case when it comes to drawing pictures and diagrams. While technology to make this more intuitive does exist, using it effectively still takes effort and practice.

Paper can aid data security

Of course nobody wants to be the cause of a data breach by leaving sensitive documents in a public place. But a hard copy document limits any unwanted exposure to what it actually contains. Whereas losing a laptop can lead to involuntary sharing of a whole lot more.

In an age where electronic data theft is more lucrative than hard copy theft, thieves are less likely to target physical documents. It's actually becoming safer to write passwords etc. on to

pieces of paper than to store them electronically. And whereas an electronic device has an obvious potential resale value, a file of paperwork doesn't, so is much less attractive to common criminals.

Paper aids mobility and health

Printed documents have a role to play in both mobilising your workforce and encouraging healthy practices. Working outside for a beneficial change of scenery with an intake of essential vitamin D, or in uncontrolled environments such as public transport where bright light may penetrate windows, is not conducive to reading off screens. Printed documents, however, lend themselves perfectly to these conditions. And of course, they never run out of power.

Paper is kinder to eyes and body

Back-lit computer screens can easily strain eyes, both because of the light contrasts and peoples' propensity to blink less while looking at a screen. Spending many hours a day reading off a screen isn't conducive to eye comfort.

At the same time, reading off a monitor means sitting in a fixed position, which over time can lead to other body stresses if correct ergonomic positioning isn't applied. Reading from a printed document gives people the freedom to position themselves naturally.

Paper is a lot greener than it used to be

Use of paper has long been considered the enemy of the environmentally friendly office. But widespread innovation in papers, pens and even ink cartridges mean there's a great choice of sustainable products available for every aspect of hard-copy creation. Alongside these, recycling schemes for a wide range of materials mean the usage trail doesn't have to end in your office.

Operating on-the-fly

Updated looks, improved functionality and a wider choice of sustainable options keep notebooks and pens up-to-date with modern-day trends.

Leitz WOW notebooks

Vibrant, positive colours combine energy with purpose. Choose from Laminated, Polypropylene (PP), *Get Organised* and *Be Mobile* ranges for a variety of practical features. Pair with matching items from the extensive WOW range for an inspiring attractive desktop.

Oxford Office Essentials notebooks

EU ecolabel certified (FR/046/001), offering great value while helping you stay green.

Pilot V5/ V7 HiTecpoint cartridge pens

Comprising 71% recycled materials and refillable up to 10 times, these quality cartridge pens put the sustainability into precision writing.

BIC® ECOLutions writing instruments

BIC has always prided itself with making practical products from a minimal amount of materials. The *ECOLutions* range is even less demanding on the planet with recycled materials accounting for 50% in pens, 57% in *Evolution™* graphite pencils and 65% in *BIC® Matic* mechanical pencils.

Pilot B2P Gel and BallGrip pens

Visibly celebrating their environmentally aware credentials, Pilot has perfected the craft of turning Bottle to Pen by manufacturing pen bodies from recycled plastic bottles. The retractable *B2P Gel* pen is built with 89% recycled plastic. The *B2P BallGrip* is built from 86% recycled content. Refillable and available in 3 colours, both are part of the *Begreen* range, which bears both ISO14001 standard and EMAS certifications.

Papermate Inkjoy pens

Effortlessly smooth, comfortable writing is made possible thanks to low-viscosity inks combined with optimised writing tips. Attractively sleek, modern designs house a rich pallet of vivid ink colours.



Hard copy heroes

Today's eco-friendly paper has all the quality you're used to, with added benefits such as being made from sustainable sources and being produced with lower CO₂ emissions.

HP Colour Laser paper

Specifically designed to work on all colour laser printers, this paper provides bold, vibrant colours and rich blacks. It is FSC certified and 100% of the wood comes from controlled sources from sustainable forests located within 128 km of the paper mill.

HP Office paper

Quality, reliability and value, perfect for high-volume printing and copying of everyday business documents. The wood used to produce HP Office comes exclusively from controlled sources and is FSC or PEFC certified.



Working forest process

Staples Advantage works with paper manufacturers that take an active approach to responsible forest stewardship. Their actions create value for landowners, communities, customers, and ecosystems on a global scale.



MultiCopy Original Eco paper

An all-round environmental champion which runs superbly and has fantastic whiteness. Produced with zero CO₂ emissions, made with wood from sustainable and traceable sources, with totally chlorine-free bleaching.

261



“Email overload is the daily struggle to find and manage the relevant within a seemingly endless supply of incoming messages.”

—Christina Cavanagh,
Professor of Management Communications,
University of Western Ontario (USA)

Reducing the burden of meetings

See 'Making meeting time work' in *Vantage Point* volume 2 for tips on reducing time-wastage caused by meetings.

Too much communication

Sharing information, ideas and instructions between staff has become so easy that it's leaving no room to actually get the work done.

"Email overload" and "too much time spent in meetings" are commonly cited by employees as being significantly detrimental to doing their jobs. Many studies have translated these problems into monetary value for lost productivity, making a compelling argument to take action.

Numerous hints and tips for everything from personal management strategies to adoption of specially developed software are out there.

Yet definitive catch-all solutions are proving elusive. This might be because the way and extent to which every individual organisation suffers is influenced by a wide variety of factors.

To explore possibilities which might work for your organisation, it's worth understanding the root causes. Carrying out in-house studies to measure your exposure and identify areas where it can be reduced are next step.

Cause and effect of irresponsible email behaviour

The detached ease of clicking a button to send an email, without witnessing the effect it has on its recipients, has made the sharing of unhelpful information all too common. Putting out ambiguous requests, forwarding other people's messages and links to documents and web pages which haven't been properly assessed for relevance is done without a second thought.

The face-to-face act of telling a person something that's of no use to them usually results in immediate negative reaction, which might be visible, verbal or both. Our instincts therefore reduce (though don't eliminate) our tendency to do this. At the same time, the recipient's instant response gives closure to the matter, freeing them to move on. This is not the case when the news is delivered by email. Dehumanisation of the communication process means that senders go unpunished for sharing non-useful information, while recipients have to make a considered conscious decision what to do about it.

Responding to tell the sender their message wasn't relevant is socially unacceptable, while simply dismissing or deleting it feels irresponsible. While the sender is often left wondering how their message was regarded and perhaps when they'll receive a response, the recipient is faced with other issues. Not knowing how to deal with such messages often results in them languishing in in-boxes, causing visible clutter. Sometimes recipients will move them to other folders, where they create a different type of underlying clutter. Either way, these unresolved matters feel uneasy and build stress.

In every case, attending to communication takes time. In addition to reading, decision-making and action-taking, every email interruption requires over 60 seconds' recovery time to refocus on the task which was previously in hand. Minimising the exposure to unhelpful messages is a valuable exercise.

Establishing email discipline

While all sorts of in-box management techniques can be adopted by recipients, out-box discipline is equally, if not more, worth pursuing. Given that one person's message might impact hundreds of recipients, implementing a corporate strategy for eliminating unhelpful emails at source means fewer man-hours are lost to the cause.

Christina Cavanagh, Professor of Management Communications at the University of Western Ontario (USA), identified various types of email characteristics that confuse and annoy recipients. The top five reported as 'pet peeves' in her study being:

- 1) Rambling or unclear messages
- 2) Trivial messages
- 3) Misuse of distribute/cc/reply to all
- 4) Unclear subject lines
- 5) Emails that were better suited as conversations

STAY FOCUSED

A commonly adopted technique for making senders more mindful of their content is to ensure every message starts with its intended purpose (and who it applies to) and ends with a clear call to action. Some organisations even enforce focus by limiting the number of words allowed in an internal email. Encouraging use of distinctive and meaningful subject lines helps set recipients' expectations and assists them in identifying the message for retrieval at a later stage.

SELECT YOUR TARGETS

Even if content is concise, it still needs to be targeted correctly. Creation of segmented recipient groups can enable communications to only be sent to relevant people, thereby avoiding wasting the time of those who don't need to know.

HOLD THAT THOUGHT

Another consideration is whether the volume of relevant emails is unnecessarily high. Important but non-urgent company news and admin information can be aggregated into weekly newsletters, instead of being distributed as separate messages. There are even some arguments for dispensing with email altogether for such matters, posting hard copies on the wall in communal areas, such as break rooms, instead. This encourages more social interaction while decluttering email in-boxes.



Your organisation. Your rules.

Email and other forms of digital communication have so quickly become the norm that it's something we were never formally taught to do. And as platforms continue to develop, so does the etiquette of using them. As a result, everybody has their own way, and some are more effective digital communicators than others.

Organisations may benefit from establishing their own guidelines. This can bring discipline, conformity and neutrality to communication which assists mutual understanding, especially between people of different generations who may consider the others' style to be either disrespectful or overly formal. A set of ground rules may even boost the confidence of those who feel more comfortable with having them (but would never ask).

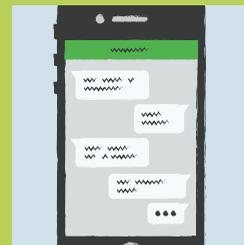
Email is not the only solution

Even for organisations who succeed in eliminating the sending of unhelpful messages, email as a medium is still often over-used to detrimental effect. The mix of quick-fire questions, information-sharing broadcasts, instructions, personal niceties and considered action requests means email is a catch-all for too many different things. Instead of being regarded as the default internal communication method, email should be one element in a suite of options.

Conducting some kinds of internal communications in different ways can enable more efficient processing of each interaction. Establishing appropriate channels and defining guidelines for using them can help alleviate overload.



Social media:
Many organisations are turning to special business-oriented social media platforms for internal discussions involving multiple people. This is more efficient than reply-all conversations over email.



Text:
Handy for one-on-one communication involving short, simple questions and dialogue, which doesn't depend on either party being behind their computer screens.



Instant messaging:
A good one-on-one solution for short, simple questions and dialogue.



Screensavers:
A non-intrusive way of broadcasting information to multiple people about important corporate news and events.



Email:
Should ideally be preserved for one-on-one communications where information needs to be retained and work needs to be done to action a request.



Face-to-face, telephone:
Telephoning or even walking over to talk to the person in question can sometimes take less total time and result in less overall disruption than both sides engaging in email dialogue. As long as inappropriate interruption is avoided, this can also help forge better colleague rapport.



Communal spaces:
Posting general company news and information as hard copy in shared areas such as breakrooms distinguishes it from job or task specific instructions and can help create a more tangible sense of community and belonging.

Where worlds collide

Traditional meets digital

While pen and paper can often reign supreme, digital is an ever-present dominant force. But there's no need for a power struggle when innovative products promote harmony between the two.



Oxford's International Notebook Connect and **Smart Charts** make conversion from hand-written notes to user-friendly digital files as easy as taking a photograph.

Patented page-scanning technology enables images to be captured via smartphone or tablet using specially developed apps. They are instantly saved as perspective-corrected PDF files, which can be automatically uploaded to *Dropbox* or *OneDrive* for immediate sharing. Seamless information flow from your pen to your colleagues' screens!



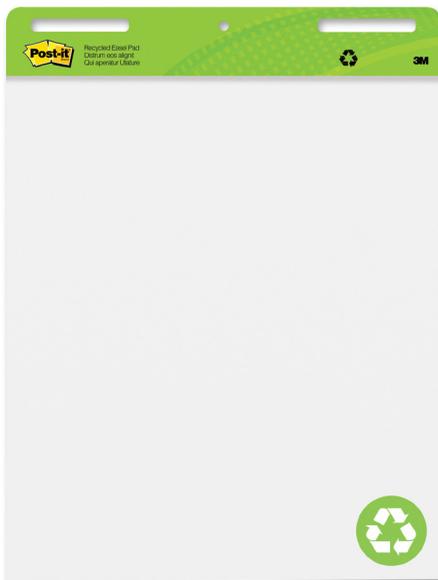
Scan, Save, Share

InConnect and *Powerchart* apps take you from paper to pixels in 3 clicks.



Pop-up meeting spaces

Dedicated meeting rooms aren't always free when you need them. But with the right tools, collaborative presentations, brainstorming and problem solving sessions can be held anywhere there's a wall or window.



Legamaster Magic-Charts ▶

are made of recyclable electrostatic foil that easily sticks to almost any surface (wood, concrete, glass, wallpaper), creating an instant whiteboard, blackboard or clearboard. Erasable Legamaster board markers enable on-the-fly changes and multiple use.

- ◀ **Post-it® recycled Meeting Charts** act like super-sized Post-it® Notes, as flipchart-sized writing sheets which stick securely to most wall surfaces and remove cleanly. Made from a minimum of 30% post-consumer content, the bleed-through-resistant sheets are as functional as an easel-based board, with added versatile mobility.



Collaboration vs concentration

Open plan offices may be great for collaboration, but background noise from other people's conversations and even office machinery can make concentration difficult.

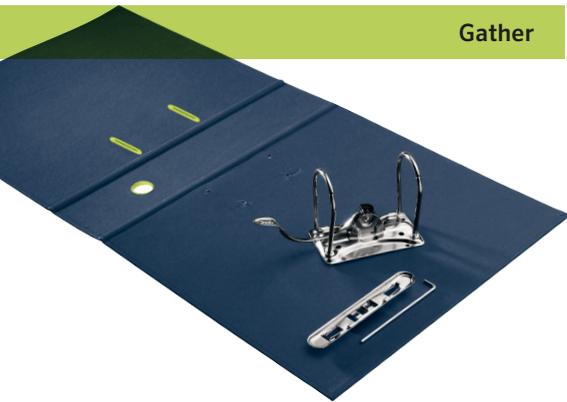
- ◀ **Plantronics' headsets** cancel out noise from the surrounding space, helping users to focus on their individual telephone conversations and other tasks.

Creating continuity

When documentation and other essentials are logically arranged and clearly labelled, everybody can easily find what they're looking for. Including all the new recruits who'll come on board over time. Implementing good organisation saves time and effort transitioning both between different employees and between office and meetings.

A well-organised office is the key to stress-free efficiency, today and tomorrow.

Gather



Leitz Re:cyle lever arch files

Proof that attractive design and sustainability can easily go hand-in-hand. Every component is created from eco-friendly materials that are 100% recyclable—including lever arch mechanisms!

Identify



Dymo Label Manager 280

An indispensable hand-held device for creating clearly legible labels which can be used to identify everything from folders and files to shelves, cupboards and equipment. Produces D1 labels in various widths and colours so you can customise as you please. Labels are quickly created on-screen and easily enhanced with design features and images via any computer.



Leitz Icon smart wireless label printer

This versatile, fully portable machine produces both paper and plastic labels in all kinds of shapes and sizes. Even banners up to 2.7m long. Use it for labelling everything from files, shelves, cupboards and equipment to organising cables and creating warning signs (permanent adhesive on plastic tape provides suitable sticking power). It also enables anyone to produce shipping labels, name badges, appointment cards and more. Labels are easily designed via an app which works with smartphones, tablets, laptops and desktop computers.

Store



ELBA filing and archiving systems

This clever modular system can be pieced together to fit every individual's or organisation's filing needs with maximum space efficiency. Highly resistant acid-free cardboard means it's suitable for long-term archiving when documents need to be protected from light, humidity and pollution.

On-the-go

Exactive® filing range from Exacompta

The Exactive range features robust and long-lasting products that combine filing, presentation, note taking and organisation.



Post-it® Recycled Notes

A greener option from this on-the-fly icon. Made of 100% recycled paper from post consumer waste. Blue Angel certified.



Embracing change



The changing workplace factors we've highlighted in this issue of **Vantage Point** represent some of the hot topics being discussed by businesses today. While we've become used to the idea of technology changing the way we do things, we are now experiencing a new wave of people-driven change. These are times of great opportunities if we recognise how to adapt our practices to satisfy evolving demands.

STAPLES Advantage

Staples Advantage helps you by proactively partnering with you to achieve your procurement goals. Matching trending workplace concerns with appropriate product solutions, we provide **best-in-class supplier rationalisation and category consolidation** to minimise both your hard and soft costs.

Thanks to our environmentally preferable program, procurement through **Staples Advantage is a perfect complement to your other sustainability measures.**

From facility solutions to tech products, breakroom supplies to business interiors, office supplies to print management, you can rely on **Staples Advantage** to be your **one source solution** for business consumables.

To consult with us further on your specific procurement requirements, contact your **Staples Advantage** representative today.

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easy on the planetsm

Helping you. Helping us. Helping the planet.

We understand that our customers want to make informed, sustainable choices when placing orders with us. With Easy on the Planet, we want to partner with you in helping you reach these goals.

When you reduce your small orders, select eco-conscious products, and consolidate your categories with us, not only will we reduce excess packaging and transport emissions—Staples will plant trees on your behalf.

With each new tree taking 10kg of CO₂ out of the air, for each year of its life, together we can be partners in creating a more sustainable future.

Everyone benefits, especially you.

- Easily track the improvement of your green credentials through our regular, customised tracking reports.
- Reach your company's sustainability objectives
- Simply identify eco-conscious products
- Lower administrative costs by making fewer small orders

To learn more about the benefits of this program, and how we will plant trees on your behalf, visit StaplesAdvantage.co.uk/easy-on-the-planet or StaplesAdvantage.ie/easy-on-the-planet

