

30 SMEs take eco-action to save the environment



WHO says small and medium enterprises (SMEs) can't play their part in saving the environment? Today being World Environment Day, DMX Asia – a lock and construction firm – will do their bit to show their commitment to Mother Earth by closing its office an hour early for the day, thereby reducing its energy consumption.

It is one of about 30 companies, large and small, taking part nationwide in Eco Action, an initiative first started in Singapore by Ricoh Asia Pacific and enacted on a larger scale for the first time today.

DMX Asia's assistant sales manager Winston Lim shares with **SHERALYN TAY** (sheralyn@mediacorp.com.sg) his thoughts on the little things SMEs can do to go green, and the "straightforward" reasons for doing so.

How did you find out about Eco Action and why were you interested to find out more and take that extra step to participate?

I attended the Eco Carnival at the HDB Hub earlier this year, where I met Ricoh's



SAVING MOTHER EARTH: Mr Winston Lim (right) switches off the lights to save energy.

Ms Masayo Hada, who introduced us to Eco Action. When I went to check out the information online later, I saw many ways we could use to save energy and in the long run, save money for the company.

My boss was very keen to be part of Eco Action as she has always emphasised energy conservation and insists on turning off the lights and computers when we leave the office. It is a routine for us to turn off all the lights when we go out for lunch.

What will your company do today and what do you think the impact

of your action will be?

Apart from our normal routine, on World Environment Day we will leave the office an hour earlier at 5pm and turn off all the lights and electrical appliances.

This is a small act, but it is a step towards not contributing to the total energy consumption for that particular day.

What benefits us most directly is that we save money.

But apart from that, we hope other small companies can become aware of this initiative. We hope to get more companies to come on board next year to spread the message.

What were some challenges you – or other companies – faced when deciding to take part in Eco Action?

We are lucky to have received plenty of support from colleagues as well as my boss who has always been keen on energy conservation. But other companies have said that it is hard to convince their colleagues or upper management to commit to it.

There is also the need to have greater willingness from all staff, and not just because of an order coming from a director or a manager. If so, it will become very regimented. People need to be more involved out of their own free will.

The response to Eco Action has been quite poor, with only 30 companies taking part. It's not a very disruptive initiative because it is only for a day. What do you think is holding companies back?

Apart from a lack of awareness, some companies – especially larger ones – may be hampered by their size and are thus unable to coordinate the participation of hundreds of workers. It could be that these mechanics or logistic issues put companies off as well.

I think Singaporeans are quite willing to follow trends, so we really have to create awareness to convince them that Eco Action is a good thing. It would help if we could engage more people to spread the word either through mouth or get mobile service providers to pass on the message via a messaging campaign.

Everyone is aware of climate change and that the icecaps are melting, because we see or read the news every day.

Eco Action is a very good chance for people and companies to link their own actions to climate change. But this must be done step by step. The theme for Eco Action is "Energy, money and you".

It's a straightforward message that everyone can understand. We have to get people involved by speaking to them personally and showing them results, such as energy and cost savings. That would be more convincing.