

[**TECH SOLUTIONS**]

GREEN TECH: NOT A CHOICE, BUT AN IMPERATIVE

SMBs can cut down on expenses using Green IT solutions

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THE SMALL and medium businesses sector is an integral part of the Indian economy and account for 8.7% of the country's GDP, 45% of the manufactured output and 40% of exports. But the flip side of it is that SMBs can have a significant impact on the environment as they are often equipped with obsolete, inefficient and polluting technologies and processes.

About 70% of the total industrial pollution load of India is attributed to SMBs. Regulatory mechanisms to ensure compliance are ill-suited as they are tailored more towards larger industries, creating a scenario where SMBs are unable to comply with regulations, and regulators face a difficult choice in ordering their closure. This is because such closure leads to a drop in production and a rise in unemployment, besides disrupting manufacturing growth.

In the past few years, experts from industry, government and NGOs collaborated to synthesise their perspectives on the role of technology in mitigating climate change. SMBs are now increasingly becoming aware that green solutions can be applied to various areas of their business operations. There is an inherent need to conserve the environment and apply regulation to reduce costs and maximise revenue. Through the application of innovative green solutions, CEOs,



CIOs and CFOs are well placed to drive a change in moving to a less energy-and material-intensive society and economy. There is a sincere attempt towards understanding how SMBs can decrease their overall carbon footprint through cost-effective energy efficiency, which would increase profitability. Today, green technology is not a choice but an imperative for sustainable development. Hence, there is a need to encourage adoption of green technologies and resource conservation practices. Green Computing has proved how maximum output can be derived from minimum input to enhance productivity. The idea is to reduce the usage of hazardous materials and adopt recyclable forms of energy to gain maximum efficiency. There are multiple ways of exercising a green agenda and can be adopted at the following stages of SMBs:

INFRASTRUCTURE

Reduce the level of emission from build-

ings and core infrastructure through improvised engineering and construction. SMBs can save up significantly on their electricity consumption by redesigning the structure of their offices to utilise natural light. Using Energy star rated appliances, low power consuming electronics, blade servers and virtualisation technologies are other remedies to reduce energy needs.

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

This area relates primarily to back-office functions such as management, finance, HR and IT organisation. Virtual communication using e-conferencing and encouraging paperless business transactions are crucial to energy saving.

SERVICE & SUPPORT

Optimising service staff to achieve minimum usage of fuel for travel by using low emission vehicles, reducing heavy use of IT and paper by setting up virtual help desks and paperless billing & invoices can be made to reduce costs.

SALES AND MARKETING

Advanced route planning for sales staff, generating online sales material, e-commerce solutions for administrative tasks as well as sales promotions & support will go a long way in having an environment-friendly agenda. The economic benefits of green IT are becoming more pronounced. In coming years, lower IT management expenses by using Green Computing resources is sure to get more and more popular in the SMB segment. ■