

The importance of waste management for businesses

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Excessive waste generated by companies poses as one of the biggest contributors to pollution—air, water and land. This World Environment Day, here's a look at how businesses are working hard to reduce their environmental impact by ensuring proper waste management at all levels



Waste generation across sectors and at all levels is a major global concern. Today, environmentalists and other stakeholders are trying hard to find solutions that address this concern and minimise its harmful effects on the planet and its inhabitants.

Even though the government and individuals are working to protect the environment, if planned well, businesses have the capacity to significantly reduce the amount of waste that they generate. This will ensure that companies reduce their carbon footprint and boost ecofriendly practices.

NUMBERS WATCH

India faces major environmental challenges associated with waste generation and inadequate waste management systems. As per the recent annual report of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on implementation of Solid Waste Management Rules, it is estimated that the total generation of solid waste will reach 165 million tonnes by 2030. A major component of this figure is expected to be generated from various business practices.

Elaborating on the steps that can be taken to dispose waste correctly, Sanjay Dubey, MD and chairman of a premier commercial vehicle manufacturer in Jamshedpur, says, “In the current scenario, the focus on cleanliness and hygiene has increased manifold. Businesses must come up with better technology and machinery that contribute towards the vision of [a] cleaner India and provide a better environment to live in.” While corporates are The first thing that businesses must do is focus on the basics—reduce the consumption of plastic and dispose waste correctly. Gradually, they must get rid of one business practice that generates waste

generate has a longterm impact. Environmentalist Meenal Jagda agrees, “The first thing that businesses must do is focus on the basics—reduce the consumption of plastic and dispose waste correctly. Gradually, they must get rid of one business practice that generates waste. For example, the easiest way is to not use disposables—such as singleuse plastic or

hazardous practices. While this will not only reduce the brand's carbon footprint, but also help them better their profit margins.”

DISPOSING WASTE

While generating less waste is key, it is equally imperative to dispose waste correctly, and in a more environment-friendly manner. Waste management expert Sushil Shinde states, “We simply can't discard waste or dump them in landfills. Dumping or burning waste adds toxic fumes to the air, which is dangerous. Waste that organisations produce should be disposed off correctly, and that will depend on what businesses use and are discarding.”

DEALING WITH E-WASTE

We live in a world that's heavily dependent on technology. The same applies to business functions too. Viral Shah, a tech investor and software developer, elaborates, “With increasing use of technology—to assist in business operations—comes a large amount of e-waste. Most companies discard this waste without checking if it can be recycled or disposed in a correct manner.

Some brands update their technology every few years, even if the device functions well. This [practice] must be reconsidered, keeping in mind the environment and the impact that the disposal of e-waste has on it.”

Electronic devices contain toxic substances and heavy metals. If disposed improperly, especially in open grounds and without being disassembled or treated, the residue generated—chromium, cadmium, mercury and lead—can seep into the soil, groundwater and air, making it toxic to flora, fauna and human beings. Therefore, on the occasion of World Environment Day, businesses must pledge to collect e-waste, recycle material using safe methods or dispose of e-waste correctly to reduce its damage on the environment.