Practical Sustainability

Actions for Businesses by type

Simple Ideas to Help Your Business Make a Difference

Introduction

Sustainability is about making positive choices that benefit your business, your community, and the environment. It does not require large budgets or major changes. Often, the most effective actions are the simple ones that become part of everyday business operations.

Whether you are a café, visitor attraction, accommodation provider, retailer, event organiser or office-based business, there are many practical ways to reduce waste, save resources, support local communities, and help visitors make more sustainable choices.

This guide provides simple ideas to help businesses identify actions that suit their size, sector, and circumstances. Remember, sustainability is not about doing everything at once. It is about taking practical steps and continually improving over time.

Accommodation Providers

- ☑ Install LED lighting and smart heating controls
- ☑ Reduce single-use toiletries and plastics
- ☑ Encourage towel and linen reuse
- ☑ Promote local attractions, restaurants and events
- ☑ Provide walking, cycling and public transport information

Food & Drink Businesses

- ☑ Reduce food waste and review portion sizes
- ☑ Source local and seasonal ingredients
- ☑ Reduce packaging and single-use items
- ☑ Donate surplus food where possible
- ☑ Highlight local suppliers on menus

Visitor Attractions

- ☑ Improve recycling facilities
- ☑ Reduce printed materials
- ☑ Protect natural and cultural assets
- ☑ Promote sustainable travel options
- ☑ Work with local schools and community groups

Activity Providers

- ☑ Follow responsible environmental practices
- ☑ Protect wildlife and habitats
- ☑ Repair and maintain equipment
- ☑ Share environmental messages with participants
- ☑ Support local conservation projects

Retail & Craft Businesses

- ☑ Reduce packaging and paper use
- ☑ Encourage reusable bags
- ☑ Stock and promote local products
- ☑ Work with local makers and suppliers
- ☑ Share the story behind products

Events & Festivals

- ☑ Reduce single-use plastics
- ☑ Use reusable signage and digital tickets
- ☑ Encourage sustainable travel
- ☑ Use local suppliers and vendors
- ☑ Support local charities and volunteers

Tour Operators & Travel Services

- ☑ Promote longer stays and local experiences
- ☑ Support local guides and businesses
- ☑ Encourage low-carbon travel choices
- ☑ Promote off-season tourism

Transport Providers

- ☑ Reduce vehicle idling and fuel use
- ☑ Improve route efficiency
- ☑ Share visitor information and local attractions
- ☑ Promote sustainable transport options

Conference & Event Venues

- ☑ Use reusable catering supplies
- ☑ Provide digital event materials
- ☑ Improve recycling facilities
- ☑ Promote local accommodation and attractions

Wellness & Spa Businesses

- ☑ Use refillable products
- ☑ Reduce water and energy use
- ☑ Source local products where possible
- ☑ Support wellbeing and community initiatives

Heritage, Arts & Cultural Organisations

- ☑ Support local artists and performers
- ☑ Promote local culture and heritage
- ☑ Reduce printed materials
- ☑ Encourage sustainable travel

Farms & Food Producers

- ☑ Improve biodiversity and soil health
- ☑ Reduce food waste
- ☑ Improve water efficiency
- ☑ Support local food networks and markets

Support Your Community

Every business can create social value by:

- ☑ Supporting local charities
- ☑ Sponsoring community events
- ☑ Encouraging employee volunteering
- ☑ Supporting local suppliers
- ☑ Working with schools and colleges
- ☑ Promoting local attractions and events

Help Visitors Discover Your Area

Share information about:

- Local attractions
- Parks and walking trails
- Cycling routes
- Events and festivals
- Independent cafés and restaurants
- Local shops and producers
- Public transport options

Your recommendations can help spread visitor spending across the local economy while enhancing the visitor experience.

Every Business Can Make a Difference

There is no such thing as a perfect sustainable business.

Some organisations may already have formal sustainability plans, while others may only be taking their first steps. Both are making positive contributions.

The important thing is to focus on actions that are achievable, relevant to your business, and meaningful to your customers, staff, and community.
Remember:

- Small actions add up.
- Progress matters more than perfection.
- Every business can make a positive impact.
- Sustainability is a journey of continuous improvement.

Final Thought

Sustainability does not need to be complicated. By making small, practical improvements and supporting the places and people around you, your business can contribute to a stronger local economy, a healthier environment, and better experiences for residents and visitors alike.