

## Frogfile keeps reusing, renewing

'There's a huge environmental impact associated with office supply consumption . . . It's an industry that has been slow to change.' -- Frogfile president Gil Yaron

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If Frogfile Office Essentials' president Gil Yaron had his way the perfect green office would be a 'closed loop' concept.

That is, the office would consume an absolute minimum and what waste is produced would be reused internally. This eco-friendly office would be paperless, furniture would be made locally, with locally sourced materials, toilets would be composting and waterless, pens would be refilled, and computers would be Energy Star efficient.

For an entrepreneur who sells green office supplies, promoting the closed loop concept seems anathema to running a business. But it's not.

In the meantime, while administrators and CEOs make the full switch to the closed loop, they still need paper, pens and binders, albeit planet friendly versions.

"There's a huge environmental impact associated with office supply consumption," says Yaron, seated in the middle of his busy East Vancouver warehouse/office space. "It's an industry that has been slow to change. I'm a lawyer, so I was familiar with office consumption when I started out. I knew there was a latent demand out there but not a lot of availability."

Frogfile opened its doors in April 2006, operating out of an 800-square -foot space on Bowen Island. Yaron, a father of two and former actor then lawyer, decided to start Frogfile because of the demand he saw for green products and his involvement in the environmental movement. He's also self-proclaimed "closet office supply geek."

"I really like the look of a ream of paper. There's something aesthetically pleasing about it."

Over the past two years, other supply companies such as Office Depot and Grand & Toy have started listening to the green movement's chorus of "consume less, buy green."

So far, Frogfile's largest coup has been beating out four competitors, "biggies" Yaron notes, to secure a two-year renewable copy paper contract with BC Hydro.



CREDIT: Bill Keay, Vancouver Sun

Gil Yaron of Frogfile opened its doors in April 2006. It's largest coup to date has been beating out four competitors to secure a two-year contract with BC Hydro.

BC Hydro's Gillian Riddell Robinson said the hydroelectricity company uses approximately 24 million sheets of paper annually. Now that they're using 100 per cent recycled, unbleached paper they're saving about 2,880 trees and five garbage trucks full of solid waste, according to [www.papercalculator.org](http://www.papercalculator.org).

"Frogfile was awarded this contract based on the quality of the paper they will be supplying, the environmental impact of producing the paper, the distance the pulp will need to travel, the distance the paper itself has to travel... and of course, price," explained Robinson.

Nicholas Lamm, manager of Sustainable Community Enterprises Inc., has watched the green office supply market bloom for five years.

Lamm advises businesses on how to implement sustainable office practices as part of the Green Workplace project, originally an Environmental Youth Alliance program.

Since the start of Green Workplace, Lamm said he's noticed a marked increase in the availability of green office supplies and a decrease in price, but he still thinks many companies have a long way to go.

"Bigger companies do not promote or market these products enough. They actually have a lot of fantastic [green] office supplies," says Lamm.

Some of the reasons to switch to green supplies are improved staff moral, higher retention and improved public perception of business practices, he says.

Companies such as Vancouver Film Studios are among those participating in this 'greenward shift.'

"We were looking for a more green approach," explains office administrator Teagen Vincze. "We're trying to become one of the first film companies in Canada to go carbon neutral. A big part of this is waste management."

Now, the studios orders eco-friendly dish soap, refillable pens and recycled paper from Frogfile.

Bennett Lee, of Broughton Law Group, is also concerned about the waste his firm creates. He first heard of Frogfile and the green office supply movement while reading Adria Vasil's book, *Ecoholic*.

"Law firms are known to be paper intensive so we're looking to use 100 per cent recycled paper," says Lee.

After considering choices offered by other office supply giants, Lee decided Frogfile offered the most "proactive alternative."

He said Yaron and his five-person staff spent time seeking out paper created by a small mill not far from Vancouver powered by burning leftover logging biomass.

"It's a lot more persuasive when someone spends 100 per cent of their time looking into sourcing only green products and can offer them at a competitive price."

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