

Simple Tips & Tactics for today's Business to reduce 'Real Costs'

Here are some very practical tactics that any business can use to reduce their business costs in areas that generally often have low cost visibility but unnecessarily high costs.

1. **Mobile Phones:** Do your research! Choose a tariff that delivers you best value for your money – driving the cost of other calls and call types down e.g. free internal calls to all company mobiles and landline numbers. Constantly monitor and amend your plan to take full advantage of your actual usage profile/requirement. Ensure your provider does what you want them to do. If not, move to an alternative provider.
2. **Desktop Print:** Set the default printing function on **all** your office PCs / Laptop to print mono and on both sides of the pages. Office paper is one of the single biggest costs and by taking this action you could not only reduce your paper costs by up to 50% but avoid paying for colour copies, often about 10 times the cost of Black & White!
3. **Print Material:** Switch all your variable print material (business cards, leaflets, compliment slips, etc) to be printed digitally. The quality today is fantastic and turnaround times can be measured in hours! This can lead to reducing printing costs by 60-70%!
4. **Mobile Phones:** Introduce and implement a “fair use” policy for all staff who have mobile phones – sharing the responsibility for individual bills with a “3 strikes – you lose it” caveat. If your staff know the bills are monitored, spends will be significantly lower than a similar business without the same policy.
5. **Desktop Print:** Install MFDs (Multi Functional Devices) into your offices. This utilizes the benefits of a single high tech device to replace your traditional photocopier, scanner, printer and fax. Not only will you reduce your overall hardware costs by implementing an all inclusive monthly cost structure but you can also reduce your monthly operational costs and avoid additional charges such as toners, service and maintenance.
6. **Office Stationery:** With this low value / high volume item, appoint a single source of supply. Working with that supplier to set up your own ‘essential items’ catalogue of pre-selected items at pre-agreed prices. Maintain these benefits by reviewing your monthly suppliers report – taking appropriate action as needed
7. **Office Stationery:** Ensure your provider “swaps” brand name products for “own brand”. You can set up this arrangement in advance with your supplier so that any of the more expensive branded items ordered are automatically ‘swapped’ and the suppliers own brands are the ones actually delivered – which can often be as low as 25% of the branded items costs and manufactured by the same company.
8. **Duplicate Payments:** High volume, Low Value areas are especially prone to paying the initial invoice and subsequent copies more than once. There are companies (and even software now available) who will do this for you periodically. Typically for every 1,000 invoices there will be between 1 to 5 falling into this category – again this typically means a company could easily have overpaid by €000 pa!

9. **Mobiles:** Ban all costly premium services. These can account for a significant amount of a businesses total bills and generally very little if any is business related.
 10. **Print Material:** Rather than paying an external print company to produce your standard business forms (especially the internally used ones), set all these forms up on a shared business drive. Your staff can then print these forms when they are required (and if you're clever, even merge with the required data!). You'll also have the flexibility to make changes at very short notice with no wastage or obsolete material!
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