

PIVOT breathe



HOW YOUR HR BENEFITS TEAM

Can Help Make Your Business Carbon Neutral

Discover the unexpected benefits offering
that can help jumpstart or further your efforts

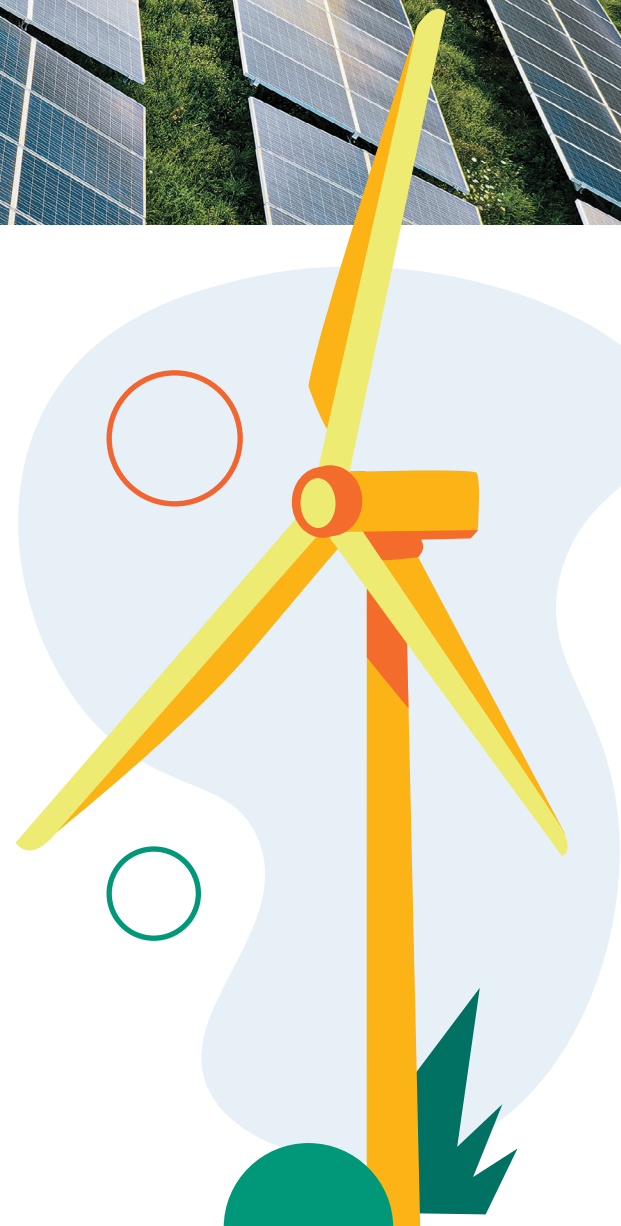


Introduction

You may have heard the phrase “carbon neutral” floating around over the past few years. Large companies such as Amazon, General Motors, Apple, and more¹ are publicly setting goals to achieve or aim for carbon neutrality over the next few decades. It’s even a growing trend among entire countries.²

But the companies listed all have something in common - a seemingly exponential pool of money to create large-scale change. Would it surprise you to know that there’s one step you can take - incredibly enough, through your benefits program - to directly impact your business’ carbon neutral efforts?

That’s right - it doesn’t take millions of dollars to begin the journey to carbon neutrality and reduce your business’s carbon footprint. Let’s start with the basics.



Carbon Neutral 101

What is carbon neutrality?

Carbon neutrality is defined interchangeably as the following:



“Having or resulting in no net addition of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere”

or



“The counterbalancing of the emission carbon dioxide with carbon offsets”³

It’s essential to fulfill the planet’s need to maintain balance through the emission of things like greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, and carbon dioxide absorption into carbon sinks (ex: the Amazon rainforest).⁴

Why is carbon neutrality so necessary now?

Human activities have caused this balance to go sideways. Excess carbon dioxide is added to the atmosphere at a rate at which the Earth cannot process it, continuing to set new record highs every year.⁵

Reducing the number of carbon emissions can do things like slow climate change, reduce humanity’s total carbon footprint, and prevent greenhouse gasses from increasing, leading to the potential to prevent millions of premature deaths due to air pollution.⁶





Why does carbon neutrality matter for businesses?

Outside of slowing or reversing the effects of climate change, working toward becoming carbon neutral is great for business. Such benefits that stem from offsetting carbon include:



Lower operating costs

Measures to reduce carbon emissions - including investing in benefits inadvertently carbon emissions - can lead to immense savings.



Higher revenue

Many consumers these days are more likely to support climate-friendly businesses, and can often provide an unexpected boost in sales and market share.



More loyal employees

A 2019 study⁷ revealed that 70% of Americans stated they would be impacted to stay long-term at a company based on their sustainability plan.

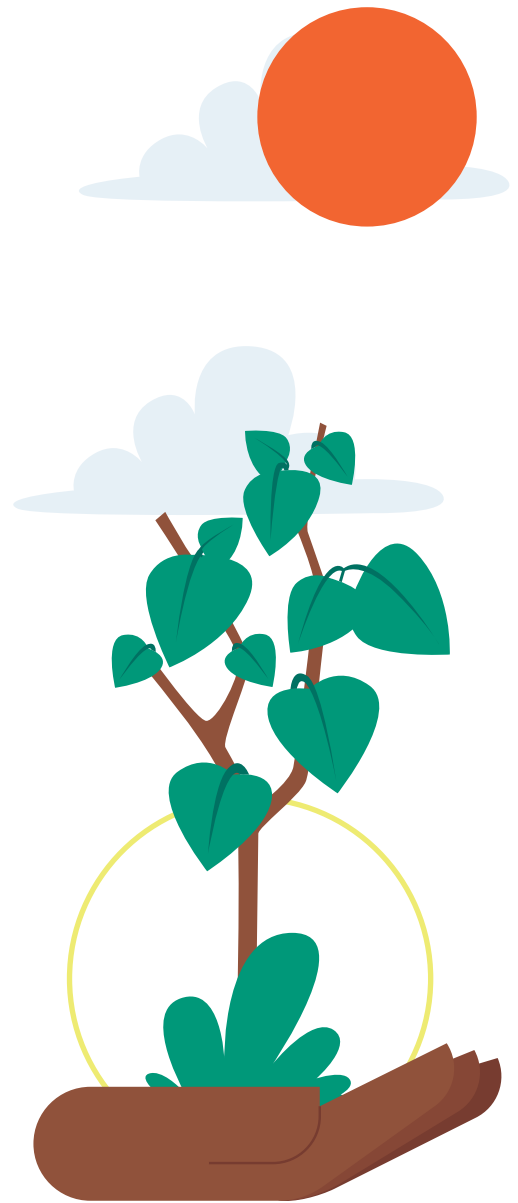


How does a business become carbon neutral?

To be carbon neutral, a business must remove as much carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as they are producing. Achieving such a feat is considered emitting net-zero emissions. Many ways that companies do this are actually by purchasing carbon offset credits.

What does that mean? **That you're not necessarily producing less carbon dioxide as a business, but are financially contributing to the removal of carbon in some form or another.** It's often considered a less overwhelming way to continue reducing your business's carbon footprint without dedicating an entire team and outside firm to the cause.

Now that you know how businesses become carbon neutral, you may be wondering, where in the world do I start, or are there areas I may be missing? **We have an answer that may just surprise you.**



SOURCES

¹CNET

²Reuters

³Merriam Webster

⁴Cool Effect

⁵Climate

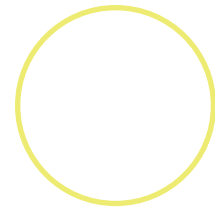
⁶NIEHS

⁷Medium



An unexpected way to further carbon neutral efforts ...

That answer? **It's the reduction of tobacco use.** Yes, this age-old problem is not only back on the rise, but efforts to reduce such use may give you a leg up on jumpstarting or furthering your carbon footprint reduction or carbon neutrality efforts. Here's why.



Why tobacco?

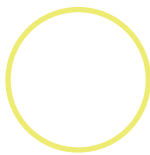
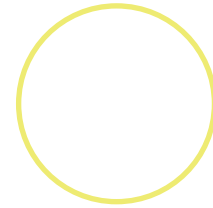
Tobacco causes great harm to the environment. Over 600 million trees are cut down each year by the tobacco industry. **For every 15 packs of cigarettes someone who smokes uses, one tree has to die.**⁸ This means an immense reduction in viable carbon sinks.

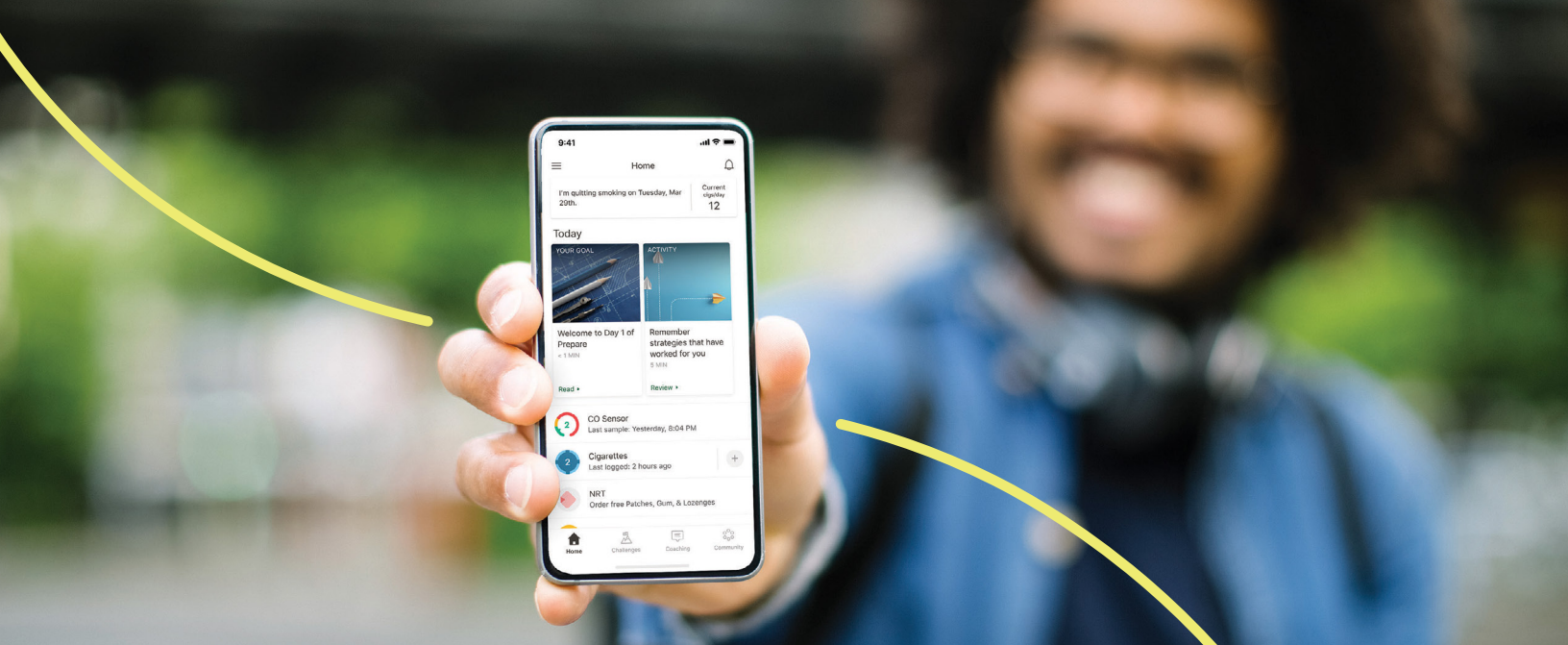
And for every cigarette smoked, there is a minimum of 1.39 grams of man-made emissions spanning around 12.8 inches of atmosphere, around 42 times the volume of an actual cigarette. For the typical person who smokes that's consuming 20 cigarettes a day, that turns out to be 22.4 pounds of carbon dioxide annually.⁹

Additionally, the United States alone produces around 16 million tons of carbon dioxide per year. Globally? **Tobacco production increases that amount of carbon dioxide production to 64 million tons.** Even secondhand smoke has an immense impact on the environment, containing over **4,000 compounds**, most of which are toxic, and 60 of which are carcinogens.

This isn't even taking into account the disposal of cigarette butts, vape cartridges, or loose tobacco in places like landfills and soil, lakes, oceans, and forests. Harmful chemicals can be released into the soil and plants can even absorb nicotine through their roots. Water can get contaminated easily - and does.

How do you help your population of those who use tobacco products quit for good?





Leverage a best-in-class tobacco cessation program

Tobacco cessation lends itself to reducing carbon neutrality, and **quitting for good is one of the best things an individual who smokes can do to reduce their carbon footprint and emissions.** In fact, outside of the potential 22.4 pounds of carbon dioxide produced, those who stop using tobacco products actually can reduce the health care waste that comes with treating tobacco-related illnesses.¹⁰

That's right. Hospitals and labs emit around 4.4% of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions and are responsible for more than 5 million tons of waste every year.¹¹ Hospitals produce around 29 pounds of total waste in general per bed every day.¹² A great way to reduce that waste? By ensuring people don't have to go to the hospital in the first place.

Here's the next step to take

Provide those who use tobacco with the opportunity to quit. Having a **top-tier cessation program available** via your business' benefit offerings to all eligible individuals - and even their dependents - is of the utmost importance.

Such an offering can help your business make a real, tangible impact on your carbon emissions, without much effort at all.

SOURCES

⁸Tobacco Free Life

⁹Pale Blue Dot

¹⁰NCBI

¹¹AAMC

¹²Stat News



Who can lead the charge on the road to carbon neutrality?

Human resources teams seem like the natural place to start when thinking about efforts such as reducing your business's carbon footprint and emissions. Oftentimes, they're the first department or person people go to when they are looking to accomplish equally lofty and ambiguous goals. Sometimes, they even have the best idea as to where a quick or easy win can be picked up.

They're also the perfect department to manage a tobacco cessation program. The intersection of both efforts creates a symbiotic relationship. Implement tobacco cessation, and add it to the list as a part of your carbon neutrality work (plus your comprehensive benefits offerings).

Report out on the success of tobacco cessation and the number of quitters, and quantify the reduced amount of carbon emissions based on tobacco users who quit. Best yet, you can brag about that number in public settings such as press releases, social media, and more.

With the right benefits solution in place, such as a tobacco cessation program, the road to carbon neutrality doesn't have to be paved with convoluted tasks. Instead, helping your tobacco-using population while inherently reducing your carbon footprint can pay off in spades, creating a healthier population, and a healthier planet - all at the same time.

There's no one-size-fits-all approach - but there is a great starting point

No two businesses will have the same approach or set of guidelines around their carbon neutral approach due to the wide variety of industries producing different shares of carbon emissions.

But there are commonalities businesses looking to jumpstart or further their efforts can agree upon - that **tobacco cessation is an unexpected but highly impactful and cost-effective way to reduce a business's carbon footprint and emissions.**

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Get started on the road to **carbon neutrality** today:



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