

# A PAPERLESS SOCIETY

BY MICHELLE MILLER

What is a paperless society anyway? A paperless society indicates a group working toward greater organization, environmental awareness, conservation, and utilizing our resources in order to do more. The history of this concept originated as the paperless office. *"The paperless office was a visionary or publicist's slogan, supposed to apply to the office of the future. The suggestion was that office automation would make the sheet of paper redundant, for routine tasks such as record-keeping and bookkeeping. It came to prominence in the days of the introduction of the personal computer. While the prediction of a PC on every desk was remarkably prescient (or, regarding it as marketing talk, very effective), the paperless nature of office work was less prophetic. Printers and photocopiers have made it much easier to produce documents in bulk, word-processing has deskilled secretarial work involved in writing those documents, and paper proliferates."*

Without going into a partisan debate or even considering politics and/or religion at all, I have been convicted to do more for our environment personally and in business. With regard to the most recent movie I can think of regarding global warming "An Inconvenient Truth" which urges each of us to take a good hard look at the ethical issue of our planet. We may view this presentation as either an effort toward fueling a political agenda or a serious issue to address. Whichever way you roll, it is accurate to suggest that within our society we have an important task to take quite seriously as our responsibility in addressing our environment. This is our only physical home at this point, and global warming or not that means something in my house as well as in business.

What does a paperless society mean to me? What does an environmentally conscious concept of living require of me? Well as a human sharing the planet, I recognize the need to preserve what we have and to protect in an honoring way my freedom to live a healthy lifestyle. So I choose to recycle, eat a vegan diet, exercise, multi-task and teach my dog to appreciate the benefits of doing the same. Or if I had human children, I would instruct them in that way also, so I have nephews and nieces to which I share my convictions in a constructive way. A paperless society means I have more resources to spend elsewhere or reserve for a time. That is not only in my personal life but also as a business woman.

In my office I have found that I no longer have to keep an office space, but may utilize the internet to reach more people and be accessible to the masses at any time. I may practice reflexology or conduct a consultation, but I have become quite creative at this also. My reflexology services may go to my client's home or a consultation is done in a neutral place or in some cases a room I share with other therapists and practitioners.

I am also a healer. As a healer I utilize the natural medicine of the earth in whole foods, organic produce, fresh clean air and water, herbs and essential oils and those who are skilled in other modalities to which I also integrate. As healers, we put effort into not taking for granted the gifts we have been given and our resources in business or practice. As Aromatherapy Practitioners, we recognize that within our industry where medicinal plants and oils are so vital to our work, we cannot ignore our biggest tangible resource.

So what does that mean to you, your family, or your place of work? Do you recycle or reuse your glass, plastic, aluminum and newsprint? Do you compost? Do you spend time thinking about how you purchase in order to reduce the amount of trash produced? Do you consider walking to work, riding a bike, carpooling or using another type of public transport? However you choose to make a difference, it is important that you are doing something, anything because it all adds up.

## Recycling saves money and resources

*"Recycling is the reprocessing of materials into new products. Recycling prevents useful material resources being wasted, reduces the consumption of raw materials and reduces energy usage, and hence greenhouse gas emissions, compared to virgin production.[1] Recycling is a key concept of modern waste management and is the third component of the waste hierarchy.*

*Recyclable materials, also called "recyclables" or "recyclates", may originate from a wide range of sources including the home and industry. They include glass, paper, aluminum, asphalt, iron, textiles and plastics. Biodegradable waste, such as food waste or garden waste, is also recyclable with the assistance of microorganisms through composting or anaerobic digestion.*

*Recyclates need to be sorted and separated into material types. Contamination of the recyclates with other materials must be pre-*

vented to increase the recyclates value and facilitate easier reprocessing for the ultimate recycling facility. This sorting can be performed either by the producer of the waste or within semi or fully-automated materials recovery facilities.

There are two common household methods of helping increase recycling. Firstly curbside collection (US: curbside collection) is where consumers leave presorted materials for recycling at the front of their property, typically in boxes or sacks to be collected by a recycling vehicle. Alternatively, with a "bring system", the householder may take the materials to recycling banks or civic amenity centers where recyclates are placed into recycling bins based on the type of material.

Recycling does not include reuse where items retain their existing form for other purposes without the need for reprocessing.<sup>2</sup>

As the National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy, we may produce over 3 tons of paper in journals, envelopes, mailings certificates, propaganda and public relations every year which is quite costly. If even a fraction of these items were omitted in paper form and transformed into other means of production and circulation, we would have additional financial resources to fund other projects. Producing a greater yield within our industry in order to support our mission statement

and our membership certainly sounds like an ideal way to manage business.

### Resources as a natural health conscious organization

NAHA reports revenue through memberships, advertising, support of businesses and practitioners and sales of educational materials. We also put effort into raising funds in the form of donations. We also have a great need to generate more resources as the months pass within a year. A non-profit organization is only as successful as our members and our members are only as successful in NAHA as we can support them. We can only support our members if we have an appropriate amount of financial support.

How do we do this then? With rising costs of postage, printing, lowered interest in journal and print advertising how do we off-set this loss? We have to think outside of the box. We have to move forward. As the current administration has done thus far, we must continue on our path and forge even further ahead. This means change. Good change, useful change.

Moving to a paperless office strategy will change the expense of moving an office when an administration changes




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hands. It will lessen the expense of meeting our members subscription needs and become on-time in journal production once again. Utilizing the money already spent on website hosting and building along with layout, we have an incredible resource to produce money by not spending it.

Let me explain, we place the journal, the same journal you receive quarterly (usually) in the mail will now be posted to the NAHA website. You will get an e-newsletter announcement when the new e-journal has been posted and you can then access it anytime online. You may print it out or click on an advertiser button or link while reading your journal and multi-task all while enjoying the latest information in our industry, drink a cup of herbal tea and not have to turn a page while holding the journal in your hands. Our advertisers get their dollars worth and our resources are increased.

Old files financial and otherwise are being scanned into a computer and placed to disc. There are programs and companies with software and servers that store all of your information without the need for additional space. This will keep the office efficient and productive not to mention clean. It will also save on paper and office supply costs.

What do we plan to use these dollars on? Case studies,

product quality assurance, essential oil awareness, community out-reach, annual conferences as well as additional projects. Consider this NAHA's effort to save resources and facilitate change more efficiently in good conscience.

As I stated before this is a Non-Political change to be implemented and it is not even an issue of faith or religion. A paperless office, an environmentally conscious motive is simply, an act of good business in an aware and resourceful way. It is also matter of survival. If NAHA can not produce good quality journals to our members while supporting our advertisers and activating a new wave of change to further our organizations mission, we will not be able to provide what NAHA has brought to the table internationally and nationally.

If you would like to know more about the process of change, please visit our website to read through the goals and vision for implementing this important change. ☘

#### References

- \* [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paperless\\_office](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paperless_office)
- \* "The Office of the Future", in: Business Week No. 2387, 30 June 1975, pp 48-70.
- \* [wikipedia.org/wiki/Recycling](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Recycling)

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