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**ICE AND WATER DISPENSERS -  
THE “GREEN” ALTERNATIVE TO BOTTLED WATER  
THAT SAVES YOU MONEY**

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In today's economic environment, most businesses are looking for ways to provide more value to their employees while managing costs and implementing “sustainable” practices. One area to explore is the office water program. Many companies are looking for higher quality water offerings that will help keep their associates satisfied and productive. However, facility managers are looking for ways to reduce costs. Concern for social responsibility has most firms looking for ways to eliminate the environmental impacts of bottled water. Finally, administrators are becoming more attentive to issues of safety and sanitation. One way for companies to provide an upscale office water program, promote sustainability, reduce costs, and improve safety and sanitation is to provide ice and water dispensers.

Bottled Water – A benefit and a curse

Drinking water is one of the best things a person can do for his or her health and wellness. Good hydration is acknowledged to reduce fatigue, improve mental acuity and retention, improve productivity, and promote better overall health, all critical factors in a high performance business environment.

Unfortunately, the way that most water is provided in offices today exacts a tremendous toll on our natural resources and on our environment. Bottled water, whether in the form of 5 gallon bottles or single serve bottles, requires significant amounts of energy and generates substantial pollution to make the bottles, process the water to fill the bottles, transport the bottles to distributors and end users, and, finally, collect, transport and dispose of the empty bottles. It has been estimated that the amount of oil needed just to manufacture a ½ liter bottle is about 4 ounces, or ¼ of the bottle.

When it comes to disposal, it is estimated that over 70 million plastic bottles are thrown away every day in the U.S. alone, and 65% of those bottles end up in landfills.

Bottled Water – A significant office expense

Not only is bottled water an environmentally unfriendly product, it is very expensive. Compared to tap water, which costs about ½ cent per gallon, bottled water usually costs over \$1 per gallon, a 2000% premium. At typical 50 person office probably pays between \$2500 and \$4000 per year for bottled water plus the expense of storing bottles and potential the injury risk of lifting heavy bottles.

## Ice and Water Dispensers – A new paradigm for office water

Ice and water dispensers offer a company the opportunity to reduce costs, improve sustainability, AND provide an added amenity to employees. Ice and water dispensers can be fitted with high quality filtration systems that meet or exceed the quality of bottled water, much of which, despite the marketing hype, is only filtered tap water in fancy bottles.

### An opportunity to go “green” – And save money, too.

Ice and water dispensers drastically reduce both the ongoing costs to provide water and the environmental footprint caused by bottled water. **For a 100 person office, a single ice and water dispenser in conjunction with reusable containers can eliminate the impact of producing, transporting, and disposing of or recycling either hundreds of 5 gallon water bottles or approximately 25,000 single serve bottles per year – AND save up to \$5,000 annually.**

### Ice – A valued amenity

Ice can provide several benefits to an office water program. First, most people in this country like ice. It makes drinks colder and keeps them colder longer. People also like to chew ice when their drinks are finished. Several studies have revealed that over 50% of the population enjoys chewing ice.

Ice water also provides a metabolic benefit for those concerned about fitness. The caloric requirement to metabolize 40 degree water to body temperature for someone drinking the recommended 8 glasses a day is the equivalent of 3 to 4 pounds a year.

Ice can solve the problem of running out of chilled water at break times. Most water coolers only have limited capacity to chill water and, often, the first couple of people with large mugs will use up all the available chilled water. With ice, you can provide your associates with an almost limitless amount of ice cold water, even at peak periods.

Ice also complements other beverages. Ice coffees, iced teas, flavor packets, soft drinks, energy drinks, and other beverages all benefit from the availability of ice.

And with ice, water and other beverages will stay cold for much longer periods than if they come from a chilled water dispenser or some other refrigerated dispenser. Ice makes all cold beverages more appealing to employees.

### Sanitation - The issue with traditional ice machines

Traditionally, ice has been available in offices from either the refrigerator or an icemaker that is installed under a counter. Larger operations may have an icemaker on top of a large storage bin. These icemakers all have open bins from which ice is scooped out by individual users. People often complain of cross contamination from unsanitary coworkers who scoop their cups through the ice bin or who may store their lunch or other food in the ice storage area.

### Ice and water dispensers – Safe, sanitary, and easy to care for

Ice and water dispensers provide the opportunity to supply your clients with ice, offering an additional incentive to switch from expensive and environmentally harmful bottled water while avoiding the pitfalls of traditional icemakers. Today's ice and water dispensers are

- Sanitary with hands-free dispense activation by lever or infrared sensing
- Easy to install and maintain by placing on a counter or on a base stand for easy utility and drain connections
- Efficient, using less water and energy than traditional cube machines

### A dispenser for all applications

There are ice and water dispensers to satisfy any application. Dispensers can be sized to store from 12 pounds up to 100 pounds of ice and make up to 25 pounds per hour, enough to satisfy a population from 10 to 300 employees. Dispensers can be placed on a counter, on a floor stand, or even on a wall. They can be provided with their own filtration systems or use a common source of filtered water.

### “Chewable” ice – The icing on the drink

While traditional undercounter, refrigerator, or bin mounted icemakers produce a hard “cube-type” ice, most ice and water dispensers have icemakers that produce a softer form of ice called extruded or “chewable” ice. Studies have shown that 2/3 of the population, and up to 90% in some areas, prefer chewable, extruded ice to cube ice. Even *The Wall Street Journal* ran a front page article on the growing popularity of chewable ice last year.

So, if you are looking for a new way to delight your associates in 2009 while going “green” and saving money, consider turning their office water program into an office water and ice program.

*Michael Rice is Product Marketing Manager for Follett Corporation. Follett Corporation is a leading manufacturing of ice machines, ice and water dispensers, and ice storage and transport equipment focused on innovative solutions that promote health, safety, and well-being in foodservice, healthcare, and office environments. Contact Mike at [mrice@follettice.com](mailto:mrice@follettice.com).*