The Greenest Office in Town (B2 · English B2)

Tekst / Transcript

When Nadia took over the small print shop on Weaver Street, the machines were older than she was. Ink was wasted, paper piled up in corners, and the electricity bill arrived like bad news every month. Her father, who had run the shop for thirty years, insisted that everything had always worked perfectly well. Nadia disagreed. She was convinced the business could be far more efficient if someone was willing to change a few habits.

Her first step was to measure everything. For two months she recorded how much paper each job consumed and how long each machine stayed switched on. The results were uncomfortable. Nearly a third of the shop's materials ended up in the bin, and the oldest printer produced an emission of fumes strong enough to make customers cough at the counter. Nadia realised that she could not simply repair the old machine. She would have to eliminate it completely and buy a cleaner replacement.

Her father resisted at first. He argued that the family had built a small empire of loyal customers over three decades, and that loyal customers did not care about fumes. Nadia pointed out that two of their biggest clients had already taken their orders elsewhere, to a rival shop that advertised itself as environmentally responsible. That argument was hard to answer. Slowly, and with some grumbling, he began to embrace the idea of modernising the shop.

The new equipment arrived in March. It printed twice as fast and ran so efficiently that the monthly bill fell by almost half. The savings were roughly equivalent to the wage of a part-time assistant, so Nadia hired a student named Theo to work three afternoons a week. Theo turned out to be unexpectedly good with people. He remembered names, made jokes about the weather, and generally made a visit to the shop more enjoyable than anyone expected a print shop to be.

Word spread. A local journalist came to write a short article and stayed for an hour, because Theo's description of the old fume-belching printer was genuinely entertaining. The article brought in customers who had never noticed the shop before. Nadia was careful, though, not to exclude the small businesses that had supported her father for years; they still received the same prices and the same quick service as everyone else. In her view, every client deserved equal treatment, whether they ordered ten leaflets or ten thousand.

There was one exception to her new rules. An elderly neighbour who printed poems for her grandchildren was never charged at all. Nadia said it was good for the soul, and her father, who rarely praised anything, admitted she might be right. Years later, whenever she happened to encounter a former customer in the street, they usually mentioned the same thing: not the speed, not the prices, but how pleasant the place had felt.

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