

white space

Through our experience we've learned that if you want to do something well, you have to know something about it. We would like to share some of what we have learned with you. Our newsletter is where you'll find marketing and visual communications topics related to retaining, communicating with and growing your organization's

Environmentally Responsible Printing

Hear the one about taping a piece of paper to your TV? It gives you free paper view.

Lame jokes aside, paper is no laughing matter. Dwindling resources have been making headlines for years. Plenty of businesses are striving to become "greener" but don't know where to begin. Using recycled materials is one way the creative industry can help businesses in their efforts to make a difference.

The impact is powerful: one ream - 500 sheets - of paper uses 6% of a tree. But using a ton of recycled fiber instead of virgin fiber reduces wastewater by a third, solid waste by more than 50% and wood use by 100%. Going green doesn't just stop at paper, though. Using a soy ink can produce up to 50% more impressions than the same amount of petroleum-based ink, saving money and the environment at the same time. Yet, knowing the benefits and actually reaping them are two different things.

Paper Clips

You know the drill. Paper's made from trees, right? Well, yes, virgin paper is. Paper can also be made from recycled materials, fibers, even eucalyptus and other alternative sources. But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Let's back up and see both the forest and the trees being used to make paper.

Many forests across the globe are being improperly managed when it comes to the paper industry. Endangered forests are being severely impacted by irresponsible logging, and even tree farms are often managed with herbicides and pesticides that pollute the earth and water.



As a result, the **Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)** has established a worldwide certification system. Printers can become certified by the organization, ensuring that they are using the highest social and environmental standards on the market.

Labels

In addition to protecting forests from being degraded or destroyed, the FSC acts a gatekeeper of sorts, using labels to identify forest products that were made responsibly. Consumers can then select which types of products to buy, knowing that they are supporting well-managed forests.





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There are three types of labels you'll find associated with the FSC:

The first reads, "FSC recycled," which means the products were made by a manufacturer that supports the re-use of forest resources to limit the destruction of trees.

The second label reads, "FSC mixed sources," meaning that the wood came from FSC-certified forests and recycled material. The product has at least 85% post-consumer waste (PCW) and up to 15% of pre-consumer waste.

Finally, you may see the "100% FSC" label, which signifies that all of the fiber used to make the paper came from forests that have met the FSC's rigorous standards.

As part of the certification process, printers must follow a "Chain of Custody," also called CoC. This process tracks FSC-certified material throughout the production process, ensuring that the supply chain maintains its integrity from harvest to consumer. The end result guarantees that the user has a product that's completely environmentally friendly.

Logos

When shopping for that oh-so-green paper, you'll run across logos with numbers ranging from 10% to 100%. The number represents the percentage of Post Consumer Waste (PCW) in the paper content; the higher the number, the less virgin material was used.

You'll also see logos that will put your mind at ease about the credibility of the manufacturer. A few examples:

PEFC – *The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification: This European-based nonprofit association offers third-party verification of sustainably managed forests in nearly 150 governments worldwide. Like the FSC, it also utilizes a chain of custody certification.*

Green-E – *Green-E offers independent certification of eco-friendly products in the U.S.*

SFI – *The Sustainable Forestry Initiative Program is an environmental protection standard that spans 135 million acres of forest in North America. The standard is recognized globally by the PEFC.*





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Chlorine

Creating 'green' paper requires whitening, but there's an environmentally friendly way to do it. If you see the words 'elemental chlorine,' it means a chemical gas has been used to brighten paper fibers, which produces dioxins and other toxins that are harsh on the environment. Beyond avoiding products made that way there are a few different acronyms to look for:

ECF - Elemental Chlorine Free

This process uses a chlorine compound (usually chlorine dioxide), which can reduce dioxins by about 90%, but not totally eliminate them.

TCF - Totally Chlorine Free

Mills using this process use no chlorine at all, producing paper without any dioxins or toxins.

PCF - Processed Chlorine Free

Paper made this way not only was bleached without chlorine, but it also contains recycled content. Neither the virgin nor the recycled fibers were treated with any kind of chlorine compound.

Think Before You Ink

Choosing natural inks is another way to ensure responsible design and print. This is where VOC, or volatile organic compounds, come in. A higher VOC rating means the ink causes more damage to the environment. For years, printers relied on petroleum-based inks that contained alcohol. As the ink dried, the alcohol and petroleum evaporated, releasing upwards of 30% of VOCs. Recently, options that create fewer toxins were developed.

Some naturally better choices are vegetable inks including linseed (made from flax), soybean and cottonseed. These inks are made with vegetable oil as a substitute for petroleum, so they significantly reduce the amount of VOCs emitted during printing. But you don't lose quality or pay more; on the contrary, these non-petroleum-based inks are available in brighter colors, are more rub resistant, and are more economic in the long run. Soy ink has been around for years and results show using it can actually improve the life span of the printer. And because the ink itself is more vivid, you can get up to 50% more impressions using less ink than the traditional petroleum-based product.

If you're still not convinced that vegetables are good for you, consider UV inks. They contain no solvent to evaporate during the curing phase, which means a huge reduction in the VOCs emitted. They're also easier for the printer to work with because they won't dry while in the graphic screen press - they have to be cured with UV light sources.

Environmentally responsible printing and publishing adds up to reduced landfill waste and toxic waste, and emits fewer toxins - all of which make our earth and our air healthier. And responsible paper sourcing ensures our forests are greener and more sustainable for future generations.

Unfortunately, it can't ensure that dumb jokes are any more likely to become extinct. Hey, that reminds me, did you hear the guy who rode his bike through the park? His friend asked him if he'd like to do it again sometime. He said, "No thanks, I'm not into recycling."

