Ten Tips to put Your Business at the Forefront of Forest Conservation

By Neva Murtha

This past March, Canopy, North America’s environmental publishing organization, launched an online Printer Leadership List showcasing actions leading printers have taken to reduce their impact on forests. The list is designed to help printers identify pragmatic ways to implement a visionary paper purchasing policy that will ultimately benefit business communities, as well as forests and their associated biodiversity, while reducing the environmental footprint of the printed product. It is also intended to showcase peer leadership.

At the risk of stating the obvious, the list focuses on forest conservation because paper comes from forests. But why does that matter? Globally, 78 percent of the world’s supply originates from ecologically significant and biologically diverse forests. With more than 80 percent of the world’s large tracts of original forests already logged and global paper consumption mounting, the pressure on the world’s remaining intact forests is intensifying. Intact forests serve as carbon sinks and they offer unique values to the ecosystem services such as clean air and water, not to mention the habitat they offer the world other valuable ecosystem services.

 Sustainable forest management practices that maintain our ability to guide environmental change and act with integrity. It is not hard to find environmental antidotes of approval, but it does take real leadership to earn credibility that actually means something.

As a living, breathing document online, the Printer Leadership List will be an ongoing showcase of green printer best practices and case studies from around North America – focused on leadership that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, forests and biodiversity footprint for the printer’s product, while also supporting on the ground forest conservation for ancient and endangered forests. Printers doing this are invited to submit new leadership developments to share with the broader print and publishing community. If your company’s name is not on the Printer Leadership List, it should be and it can be.

David Podmorovsky, Sustainability Director with EarthCode, explains the company’s paper position. “It’s powerful, forward-looking quote. “We live in a world where our forests and all natural resources are under intense pressure. Printers must embrace their vital role in the supply chain and embrace being part of the solution in the long-term viability and sustainability of our forests. It is necessary for the continued viability of our industry and a moral responsibility.”

Set timelines and targets to implement your policy

This is key to knowing where you are at now and identifying the what you need to do to be a forest conservation leader. It gives everyone on your team clear goals to strive towards.

Cut out controversial sources

Sourcing paper from controversial sources such as illegally logged from areas known for their biodiversity. Action can be taken now, and the sooner the better.

Train your sales team on how to sell eco-paper to clients and... your clients will be sold on you

Ecopaper is a product with a unique value proposition that can draw customers into a closer relationship with your business. Selling eco-paper says a lot of good things about your business. But is your sales team telling customers that story? Are you drawing them in?

Develop an eco-paper policy with an environmental publishing expert like Canopy

Last but certainly not least... while point number 10 appears to be self-serving, we cannot stress enough the importance of establishing an ongoing, workable business platform for your paper policy. It might be tempting to develop an eco-paper policy on your own, but Canopy has been working with publishers and printers for 11 years helping them to develop industry-leading policies.

These are just 10 of the leadership actions Canopy has identified as part of its Printer Leadership List. We invite you to share your own environmental innovations or recent adoptions for inclusion on our list and we welcome any opportunity to collaborate with interested printers and publishers in improving their environmental performance.

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