

# 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, 71 percent of the world's paper 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 the world other valuable ecosystem services such as clean air and water, not to mention the habitat forests provide for biodiversity.

Forest fragmentation and degradation play significant roles in the decline of much of the world's biodiversity. Several carbon-footprint studies (*Time* and *In Style 2001*, *US Book Industry 2007* and *Backpacker 2008*) show paper accounts for anywhere between 48 and 88 percent of a printed product's total carbon footprint, while the printing itself is four to eight percent of the total. Yet much of the world's paper fibre is derived from the world's endangered forests, such as the temperate rainforests of the Pacific Northwest, the Boreal stretching across Canada, and the tropical rainforests of the Amazon and Indonesia.

The good news is, printers, as significant purchasers of paper, can help reduce the impacts on the world's forests

and biodiversity by sourcing paper that is forest-certified, recycled and/or containing agricultural residue content. A leading eco-paper procurement policy is a great first step for any meaningful environmental action a printer takes, and one that can significantly improve a company's environmental performance when the policy is implemented.

Helping companies develop eco-paper procurement policies is Canopy's stock and trade, but we are also increasingly finding that in a world where eco-claims are a dime-a-dozen, our partners in the printing and publishing industry are finding increased value in our ability to guide environmental change and action with integrity. It is not hard to find environmental stamps 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 the carbon and biodiversity footprint of the printed 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. Talk to Canopy about how to be included.

The list joins Canopy's other online tools and resources for printers, including the Eco-Paper Database.

Without further ado, here are 10 tips to help place your company at the forefront of forest conservation, which is a position now being eyed by many large printing consumers across North America:

## ① Measure and report current paper use, including forest-certified and recycled content

Customers are not interested as much in the framed certificate on the wall as they are in real change on the ground. It is fine to say you have been certified, but it is better to walk the talk. What gets measured gets managed, and measuring and reporting forest-certified content and recycled content sets a bar for others to aspire to. Public reporting on your Website and in your annual reports is a transparent way of proving your company's investment in greener operations.

EarthColor, a commercial printing company based in New Jersey, deserves special mention for producing an annual sustainability report that pulls no punches on the true impact of its paper usage on forests. Through transparent reporting, using Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) principles, a customer is able to learn that in 2009, 46 percent of the paper purchased by EarthColor was FSC certified. Now that's transparency!

David Podmayersky, Sustainability Director with EarthColor, explains the company's paper position, in a wonderful, 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 imperative."

## ② Set timelines and targets to implement your policy

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

## ③ Cut out controversial sources

Sourcing paper from controversial sources such as illegally logged fibre from places like Indonesia and the Amazon is a dirty habit we should all kick. Selling certified or recycled paper at one counter, and virgin paper from a conservation hotspot at another, is a glaring inconsistency that reflects poorly on a business' ability to track chain of custody as well as the depth of its commitment to the environment. Take the easier route – there are more than enough eco-friendly papers available on the market to shift your company's supply. Canopy's Eco-Paper Database is a good place to start looking for new sources.

## ④ Train your sales team on how to sell eco-paper to clients...and your clients will be sold on you

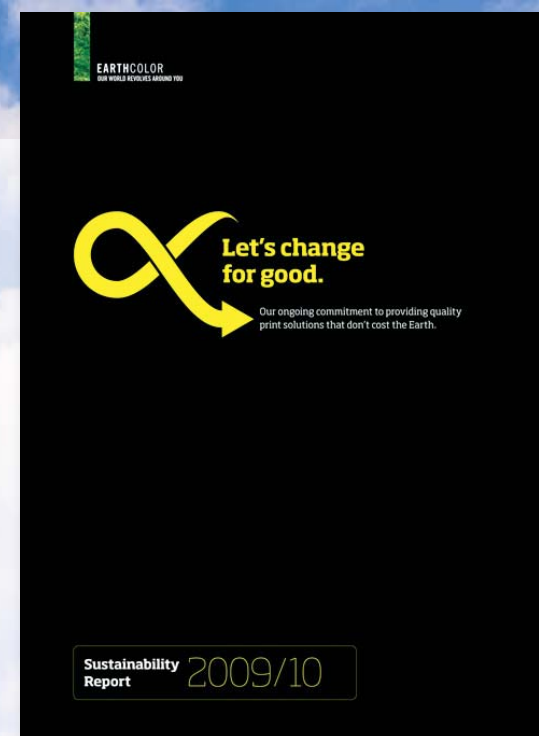
Ecopaper is a product with a unique value proposition that can draw customers into a closer relationship with your business. Selling eco-paper says a lot of good things about your business, but is your sales team telling customers that story? Are you drawing them in?

## ⑤ Offer a line of 100-percent, post-consumer-recycled paper at price parity

By negotiating volume purchasing price contracts with leading environmental mills, you can offer your customers better environmental choices at the same price as virgin non-certified paper. Make it easy for you and your customers to do the right thing.

## ⑥ Support forest conservation and visionary conservation agreements

Don't know where to start? Canopy can help. Transcontinental has had a paper procurement policy, developed in collaboration with Canopy, since 2007. One of the Montreal-based company's most-recent forest conservation leadership acts was to leverage its purchasing power and encourage Forest Product Association of Canada (FPAC) member companies to sign on to the groundbreaking Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement – with Canopy and eight other environmental organizations. Transcontinental is actively advancing conservation on the plant floor, as well as back where it counts on the forest floor.



EarthColor's sustainability report.

## ⑦ Be part of making history

Paper derived from agricultural residue (straw waste, for example) helps safeguard our climate and our forests and provides new economic opportunities for local communities across North America. It is also the future of paper and it exists as a prototype right now. Ottawa-based Dolco Printers was an essential partner in the trial of Canopy's "wheat sheet" that saw *Canadian Geographic* be the first magazine in North America printed on a coated paper made with 20 percent wheat-straw residue. New agricultural-residue papers are being developed and several paper producers are now considering how to implement commercial production strategies over the next two to three years.

## ⑧ Recycle 100 percent paper waste and keep it in North America

Recycling is an important part of taking pressure off the world's remaining intact forests. Keeping recyclable paper waste in North America is also critical if we are going to maintain our de-inking and recycling capacity at home. EarthColor recycles 98 percent of its paper waste from sheetfed and web presses – totaling 14,285 tons per year. Are you recycling 100 percent and stipulating it stays here?

## ⑨ Go beyond certification and soy-based inks to other footprint-reducing actions

Hemlock Printers, based in Burnaby, British Columbia, is one of a handful of firms reducing the footprint of its operations through initiatives like carbon accounting, while others are using truly renewable energy, like wind power. Other printers have improved the energy efficiency of their presses and buildings; reduced their transportation footprint by switching to rail over truck; or have been active in their community with donations.

## ⑩ 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 in-house, but Canopy has been working with publishers and printers for 11 years helping them to develop industry-leading policies.

Working with an environmental organization provides third-party knowledge, expertise and validation for the development of your company's paper policy, and if you adopt best practices, you may be eligible to use our trademarked "Ancient Forest Friendly" logo on your client's products and materials – free of charge. The Ancient Forest Friendly brand has recognition in the marketplace, most notably as the paper of choice for a number of the final Harry Potter series books published in Canada, United Kingdom and Germany.

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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