

The Business of Being Green

Adopting Eco-Friendly Strategies “Sustains” Reprographers, Benefits Environment

By Maree Joyce, Product Marketing Specialist,
Océ North America

Despite the various challenges facing reprographers today, developing sound eco-friendly business practices and assisting their architecture, engineering and construction (AEC) customers to meet their own sustainability goals continues to be an ongoing focus for many. The catalyst behind this can be attributed to recent industry outlook studies that define green building as one of the most influential trends impacting the AEC community. Factors such as a renewal of environmental consciousness in the U.S., the federal government’s prioritization of green jobs and volatile energy costs, which have made sustainable design and energy efficiency even more attractive from an economic perspective, are driving this trend¹. Those organizations actively redefining what it means to print green – and those willing to “walk the green walk” – are in a unique position to maintain customer loyalty and capture market share in an increasingly competitive economic environment.

Converting to Recycled and FSC-certified Paper

Paper lies at the heart of reprographers’ operations. As times change striving to adopt procedures that conserve natural resources, reuse existing resources and embrace technology that make possible a more paperless, yet still viable, way of business is essential. Consider this: global production in the pulp, paper and publishing sector is expected to increase by 77% from 1995 to 2020². Reprographers are in a unique position to help reduce this statistic by embracing green practices – such as technology that enables digital operations and minimizes inaccurate printing – that can minimize paper usage and paper waste.

Research by the Alliance for Environmental Innovation has shown that each ton of recycled fiber that displaces a ton of virgin fiber used in coated ground wood paper can:

- Reduce total energy consumption by 27%

- Lower net greenhouse gas emission by 47% and reduce particulate emissions by 28%
- Decrease wastewater by 33%, reduce solid waste by 54%, and reduce wood use by 100%³.

Willamette Print & Blueprint, based in Portland, OR, can attest firsthand to benefits of utilizing their 30% post consumer waste paper milled at Sustainable Forestry Initiative locations. Given the approximately 144 tons of paper used in their production facilities each year, they are able to contribute to a savings of 576,000 KWH of energy, 1,108,000 gallons of water and 2,448 trees by making the switch to recycled media . “This practice helps preserve the delicate natural resources so vital to environmental sustainability and renewal,” said David Guzman, Willamette Print & Blueprint’s vice president & general manager.

While the cost of using recycled paper may be slightly higher for clients than using “virgin stock”, many reprographers are finding their customers are less concerned about the associated costs than they are the environmental payback. And, because the look and feel of today’s recycled paper has dramatically improved so that it’s virtually indistinguishable from virgin bond, reprographers can also ensure they are supplying clients with high quality construction documents. In turn, AEC clients can then use those documents can be used to request Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED®) points in the Innovation in Design category for demonstrating quantifiable environmental benefits not specifically noted in the LEED Rating System™.

Patricia Clark, planroom administrator of Reprographics Northwest in Seattle, WA, has found that using recycled paper has helped cement customer loyalty. “Our customers especially appreciate that we stock locally produced 100% small format paper,” Clark said. “And since listing Océ 4511-R 30% recycled wide format bond as a house stock, we’ve seen a steady increase in its popularity.”

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) certified paper, where FSC or SFI “chain of custody” certification guarantees that responsible forest management and environmental standards are met during logging, manufacturing and printing, is another option reprographers can offer to clients. Angela Giraldo, director of marketing and green services for Reliable Graphics in California, the only reprographer to be FSC and SFI-certified and proud member of the U.S. Green Building Council, has found these designations invaluable to her operation and is thrilled

to be able to say, “As an extension of our dedication to sustainable efforts, we proudly offer recycled cardboard binders, CD sleeves, edge tabs, Eco Board and Eco Banner, which biodegrades in as few as nine months.”

Other reprographers have also gone a step further in using eco-friendly mounting materials. For example, the majority of Santa Monica, CA-based Blair Graphic’s mounting substrates are made from recycled material, including Eco-Board and honeycomb-board.

Replacing Paper with Online Project Management

Recognizing that minimizing the use of paper in the AEC project cycle is a surefire way to support sustainability goals; many reprographers are now offering digital alternatives to traditional paper-based methods. California-based BarkerBlue Digital Imaging encourages the use of online document management applications that allow customers to create electronic “take-offs,” save files locally as PDFs and link and e-mail files, to minimize the need for customers to print in large volumes. Extending the digital options push, Willamette Print and Blueprint has implemented a paperless invoice and month-end statement system. “It allows our customers to review PDF documents of their invoices and receive their month-end statement electronically,” stated Guzman.

Reliable Graphics’ customers can utilize online project management software to order plans and ITBs online. “Most of our projects are managed online,” Giraldo said. “And we offer local file archiving and encourage digital file transfer via FTP or Océ Repro Desk® software to further reduce paper usage.”

Electronic project management also slashes the fuel – and associated carbon emissions – required for job pick-up and delivery. For instance, Blair Graphics promotes online digital services, including PlanWell EWO™ (Electronic Work Order System) and MetaPrint, which send files electronically versus using a driver to pick-up and deliver content.

In addition, reprographers increasingly transmit jobs digitally across the country and the globe for remote printing, thus eliminating the need for overnight shipping – costly to the environment and the customer.

Environmentally Agreeable Equipment

Leasing or using ENERGY STAR®-rated printers and equipment is another way reprographers can gain “green ground” in the quest for improved sustainability and a

reduced carbon footprint. This rating denotes equipment which performs at peak levels of energy-efficient product performance – wide format printers with this designation, for example, consume less power overall and use more efficiently what power they do require.

BarkerBlue Digital Imaging, Inc. extends energy efficiency to its clients by offering them the Océ TDS line of large format printers, with energy-saving features like no warm-up time, one-touch green button printing and the capacity to instantly return to sleep mode after printing. And Blair Graphics has found green advantages in the ability to market the Océ ColorWave 600® color printer to clients looking for LEED certification opportunities or for those who simply wish to switch to sustainable products.

For many reprographers, upgrading to ENERGY STAR-rated printers marks just the beginning. Reliable Graphics' Giraldo explained that to minimize energy use in other areas, they have purchased ENERGY STAR-rated computers, installed ENERGY STAR-rated thermostats that are programmable, and begun to transition to ENERGY STAR-rated refrigerators and microwaves.

Leading through Sustainable Example

A multifaceted approach to green initiatives in all nuances of operability benefits reprographers on many fronts – the most important being their ability to secure customer loyalty through leading by example. This includes striving to reduce paper waste, recycle and reuse at every opportunity. “We have a recycling program in place to send content cores, caps and boxes back to the manufacturer. We also are an authorized reseller of AEC products including recycled bond media,” explained Guzman. Other reprographers recycle plug ends and toner cartridges as well as used plan tubes, CDs and pallets.

Eco-conscious reprographers have also found ways to apply green practices to a broad spectrum of their daily operations, including:

- Replacing conventional light bulbs with energy-efficient compact fluorescents
- Installing motion-activated light sensors to turn lights on and off
- Utilizing low VOC paint in offices
- Replacing carpeting with recycled rubber flooring
- Installing ceiling fans to better circulate hot and cold air
- Improving the seals around all warehouse doors to reduce heat loss
- Using recycled-content bathroom supplies and eco-friendly cleaning alternatives
- Installing low-flow toilets and low-flow aerators on sinks

- Holding videoconferences via webcam in lieu of putting additional cars on the road
- Using solar-powered outdoor signage
- Offering “green services” seminars to inform and educate clients
- Catering office gatherings with locally grown food.

BarkerBlue Digital Imaging has gone so far as to install a \$1.5 million, 170 KW, photo voltaic system (solar panels), which allows it to generate 75% of its own power while feeding power back to the local utility on the weekends when its facility is idle (enough to power 25 homes). A live web monitor of the system can be found at <http://www.barkergreen.com/swf/index.html>.

Encouraging employees to support sustainability is a vital part of reprographers' green goals. Many believe that involving employees in helping to shape corporate green behavior inspires and reinforces environmentally sound personal choices. Reprographics Northwest places educational and inspirational posters around their shop to encourage recycling and has been recognized for three straight years as a *Best Workplace for Recycling* by the King County Department of Natural Resources. Blair Graphics employs an employee suggestion program encouraging ideas to eliminate waste or spoilage and reduce their environmental impact. Others make a conscious effort to locate facilities on public transportation routes, offer incentives for carpooling, provide bike-friendly storage options and reward employees' green efforts with special recognition.

Sustainable Practices Cultivate Positive Results

The green movement has never been stronger and, in response, the AEC community continually strives to better connect the line between supplier eco-responsibility and their own internal initiatives. As such, reprographers that take proactive steps to help reduce the impact on the environment with green business practices and eco-friendly, sustainable equipment are finding they can achieve an overall competitive advantage and maintain customer loyalty.

References:

¹Zweigwhite's 2009 AEC Industry Outlook: Strategy and Insight for Design & Construction Firms, March 11, 2009

²OECD Environmental Outlook. Paris: OECD, 2001

³Environmental Paper Network, "Paper Related Statistics," www.environmentalpaper.org/paper-statistics.html
(accessed 7/20/09)

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About Océ

Océ is a leading international provider of digital document management technology and services. The company's solutions are based on Océ's advanced software applications that deliver documents and data over internal networks and the Internet to printing devices and archives -- locally and around the world. Supporting the workflow solutions are Océ digital printers and scanners, considered the most reliable and productive in the world. Océ also offers a wide range of display graphics, consulting and outsourcing solutions.

Océ employs around 23,000 people, with 2008 revenues of approximately \$4.3 billion, operates in around 100 countries and maintains research and manufacturing centers in the Netherlands, the United States, Canada, Germany, France, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Romania and Singapore. Océ North America is headquartered in Trumbull, CT, with additional business units in Chicago, IL; New York City; Boca Raton, FL; Salt Lake City, UT and Vancouver, BC. North American revenues represented approximately half of Océ's worldwide business in 2008, and employment is approximately 10,000. For more information about Océ, visit www.oceusa.com. Outside the U.S., consult <http://global.oce.com>.

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